



ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA

THE DIALOGUE *of* ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA

A conversation with God on living your spiritual life to the fullest



TAN·CLASSICS

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ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA

Nihil Obstat:
Joseph Wilhelm, S.T.D.,
Censor Deputatus.

Imprimatur:
Gulielmus, Episcopus Aridelensis,
Vicarius Generalis

Westmonasterii,
die 13 Dec., 1906

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A conversation with God on living your spiritual life to the fullest

*Dictated by her, while in the state of ecstasy,
to her secretaries,
and completed in the year of Our Lord 1370*

Together with
AN ACCOUNT OF HER DEATH
BY AN EYE-WITNESS

*Translated, from the original Italian, and preceded by an
Introduction on the Life and Times of the Saint, by
ALGAR THOROLD*

A NEW AND ABRIDGED EDITION



TAN·CLASSICS

TAN Books is an imprint of Saint Benedict Press, Charlotte, North Carolina.

Originally published in 1907 by Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd, London. Photographically reproduced and republished by TAN Books and Publishers in 1974. Retypeset and republished by TAN in 2008. Republished in 2010 by Saint Benedict Press, TAN Books.

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Published with the assistance of The Livingstone Corporation. Cover and interior design by Mark Wainright, The Livingstone Corporation. Typeset by Saint Benedict Press, TAN Books.

Cover Image: *The Ecstasy of St. Catherine* by Annibale Carracci (1560-1609); photo © 1997 by Mauro Magliani; Alinari/Art Resource, NY.

ISBN: 978-0-89555-149-8

Printed and bound in United States of America.

11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2

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PREFACE

WHY should you read *The Dialogue of St. Catherine of Siena*? Because God speaks through this great Saint to you, and me, and His whole Church. Remarkable though she was, Saint Catherine merely served as a vessel for the Lord's message. In this spiritual classic, God's message covers four topics: Divine Providence, Discretion, Prayer, and Obedience. Each of these treatises contains instruction and inspiration for your daily life as they did for Catherine and her contemporaries.

Born in 1347 as the second youngest of 25 children, Caterina Benincasa was an extraordinary woman that God blessed with extraordinary experiences. Christ, Mary, angels, and saints appeared to her from the time she was six; the Pope heeded her requests and returned home to Rome from Avignon; Christ gave her His stigmata; and God the Father spoke to her as a dear friend.

One reason The Dialogue is applicable to you is because you have the fortunate yet challenging experience of living in the current culture. While we have more tangible blessings, more freedoms, and more opportunities to search for truth, we are also besieged with a moral murkiness that seems to worsen with every generation.

Catherine's *Treatise of Divine Providence* can remind you that God is alive and well in this world, awaiting an invitation into your life, into your family's life, into the life of anyone who forgets that God is omnipresent—not only present to all things, but present in all things, as a creator is present in his greatest work. God's greatest work is not the creation of man, but the creation of God-made-man, Jesus of Nazareth, who brought from Heaven an infinite mercy upon a fallen people. And thus, the Lord explains that His Providence is most recognizable in the mercy poured upon us. His mercy is so great that if you "carry yourselves with true patience, with grief for your sins, and with love of virtue for the glory and praise of My Name ... I shall not remember that you ever offended Me." Only an infinite God can make our gravest sins as if they never existed.

The Saint's *Treatise of Discretion* can be a guiding light in a darkening world, where objective truth is shunned and relativism is promoted as the moral law. We live in an age where every choice is to be respected, where intolerance is the most grievous of sins, and where our children are taught to condone every act of their friends because it might be "right for them." This treatise on discretion teaches, however, that moral virtue should be our guiding principle in all we do—and there is never an exception.

Our Lord said to Catherine, "if one single sin were committed to save the whole world from Hell, or to obtain one great virtue, the motive would not be a rightly ordered or discreet love, but rather indiscreet." The great Catholic mind of John Henry Cardinal Newman made a similar declaration in his *Apologia*: "The Catholic Church holds it better for the sun and moon to drop from heaven, for the earth to fail, and for all the many millions on it to die of starvation in extremest agony ... than that one soul ... should be lost ... should commit one single venial sin, should tell one willful untruth, or should steal one poor farthing without excuse." It is the virtue of discretion that can assist the human mind in understanding that morality never grants the slightest compromise.

But it is the same virtue that simultaneously dictates that a soul "should love her neighbor with such devotion that she would lay down a thousand times, if it were possible, the life of her body for the salvation of souls, enduring pains and torments so that her neighbor may have the life of grace." It is discretion that shows that a bodily sacrifice, as Christ's very own, is the perfect sign of love. Perhaps for us this means selflessly attending to the family by cooking dinner or keeping house, mowing the grass or sitting through a long commute, or perhaps it means studying hard to prepare for a greater future. Life is full of "laying down your life" moments, and discretion tells us to embrace them. And if we are to obtain discretion in its fullness, we must turn to God in prayer, which leads us to the next treatise.

We live in a culture where a vibrant faith is many times ridiculed, where prayerful worship is often considered an anachronistic and meaningless ritual. Some applaud prayer as an exercise in self-awareness, or worse yet, self-worship. Even the faithful people that bend their knees to adore our Lord have innumerable distractions. It seems that every minute of our lives is filled with noise, sometimes from without, and sometimes from within. Our Lord explains, however, that too often we merely use "vocal" prayer rather than true "mental" prayer. Be sure that your prayers are more than just words, He instructs us. Be sure that your prayers are words of love.

Finally, the *Treatise of Obedience* is especially applicable to today's culture where there is little if any formality, respect for the old, or reverence for the sacred. We find our model of obedience in Jesus Christ, perfectly obedient to His Father. And with obedience comes a peace beyond any fleeting consolation the world can offer. On the flip-side, disobedience, like that of Adam before you, only brings isolation, fear, and misery. Remember that the gates of Heaven were closed by disobedience and reopened by obedience—and so will your heart be opened by humble obedience to Our Lord.

God may not speak with you directly, as He did with Saint Catherine, but He still provides you with the opportunity to hear His voice through these pages. *The Dialogue of St. Catherine of Siena* is a timeless classic because it contains a timeless message. Our Lord is waiting to begin His own dialogue with you in these pages and through the virtues that these pages will help you obtain.

*J. Conor Gallagher
Vice President of Publishing
Corpus Christi, 2008*

INTRODUCTION

IT WOULD be hard to say whether the Age of the Saints, *le moyen âge énorme et délicat*, has suffered more at the hands of friends or foes. It is at least certain that the medieval period affects those who approach it in the manner of a powerful personality who may awaken love or hatred, but cannot be passed over with indifference. When the contempt of the eighteenth century for the subject, the result of that century's lack of historic imagination, was thawed by the somewhat rhetorical enthusiasm of Chateaubriand and of the Romanticists beyond the Rhine, hostility gave place to an indiscriminating admiration. The shadows fell out of the picture; the medieval time became a golden age when heaven and earth visibly mingled, when Christian society reached the zenith of perfection which constituted it a model for all succeeding ages. Then came the German professors with all the paraphernalia of scientific history, and, looking through their instruments, we, who are not Germans, have come to take a more critical and, perhaps, a juster view of the matter. The Germans, too, have had disciples of other nations, and though conclusions on special points may differ, in every country now at a certain level of education, the same views prevail as to the principles on which historical investigation should be conducted. And yet, while no one with a reputation to lose would venture on any personal heresy as to the standards of legitimate evidence, the same facts still seem to lead different minds to differing appreciations. For history, written solely *ad narrandum*, is not history; the historian's task is not over when he has disinterred facts and established dates: it is then that the most delicate part of his work begins. History, to be worthy of the name, must produce the illusion of living men and women, and, in order to do this successfully, must be based, not only upon insight into human nature in general, but also upon personal appreciation of the particular men and women engaged in the episodes with which it deals. With facts as such, there can indeed be no tampering; but for the determination of their significance, of their value, as illustrative of a course of policy or of the character of those who were responsible for their occurrence, we have to depend in great measure on the personality of the historian. It is evident that a man who lacks the sympathetic power to enter into the character that he attempts to delineate, will hardly be able to make that character live for us. For in Art as well as Life, sympathy is power.

Now, while this is true of all history whatever, it is perhaps truer of the history of the middle ages than of that of any more recent period, nor is the reason of this far to seek. The middle ages were a period fruitful in great individuals who molded society, to an extent that perhaps no succeeding period has been. In modern times the formula, an abstraction such as "Capital" or the "Rights of Man" has largely taken the place of the individual as a plastic force. The one great Tyrant of the nineteenth century found his opportunity in the anarchy which followed the French Revolution. The spoil was then necessarily to the strong. But even Napoleon was conquered at last rather by a conspiracy of the slowly developing anonymous forces of his time than by the superior skill or strength of an individual rival. The lion could hardly have been caught in such meshes in the trecento. Then, the fate of populations was bound up with the animosities of princes, and, in order to understand the state of Europe at any particular moment of that period, it is necessary to understand the state of soul of the individuals who happened, at the time, to be the political stakeholders.

It must not be thought, however, that the personality of the prince was the only power in the medieval state, for the prince himself was held to be ultimately amenable to an idea, which so infinitely transcended earthly distinctions as to level them all in relation to itself. Religion was in those days a mental and social force which we, in spite of the petulant acerbity of modern theological controversies, have difficulty in realizing. Prince and serf would one day appear as suppliants before the Judgment-seat of Christ, and the theory of medieval Christianity was considerably in favor of the serf. The Father of Christendom, at once Priest and King, anointed and consecrated as the social exponent of the Divine Justice, could not, in his own person, escape its rigors, but must, one day, render an account of his stewardship. Nor did the medieval mind, distinguishing between the office and the individual, by any means shrink from contemplating the fate of the faithless steward. In a "Last Judgment" by Angelico at Florence, the ministers of justice seem to have a special joy in hurrying off to the pit popes and cardinals and other ecclesiastics.

For it is an insufficient criticism that has led some to suppose that the medieval Church weighed on the conscience of Christendom solely, or even primarily, as an arbitrary fact: that the priesthood, aided by the ignorance of the people, succeeded in establishing a monstrous claim to control the destinies of the soul by quasi-magical agencies and the powers of excommunication. Nothing can be further from the truth....

Sabatier points out truly that the medieval saints occupied much the same relation to the ecclesiastical system as the Prophets of Israel had done, under the older dispensation, to the Jewish Priesthood. They came out of their hermitages or cloisters, and with lips touched by coal from the altar denounced iniquity wherever they found it, even in the highest places. It is needless to say that they were not revolutionaries—had they been so indeed the state of Europe might have been very different today; for them, as for other Christians, the organization of the Church was Divine; it was by the sacred responsibilities of his office that they judged the unworthy pastor.

An apt illustration of this attitude occurs in the life of the Blessed Colomba of Rieti. Colomba, who was a simple

peasant, was called to the unusual vocation of preaching. The local representatives of the Holy Office, alarmed at the novelty, imprisoned her and took the opportunity of a visit of Alexander VI to the neighboring town of Perugia to bring her before his Holiness for examination. When the saint was brought into the Pope's presence, she reverently kissed the hem of his garment, and, being overcome with devotion at the sight of the Vicar of Christ, fell into an ecstasy, during which she invoked the Divine judgment on the sins of Rodrigo Borgia. It was useless to attempt to stop her; she was beyond the control of inquisitor or guards; the Pope had to hear her out. He did so; proclaimed her complete orthodoxy, and set her free with every mark of reverence. In this highly characteristic episode scholastic logic appears, for once, to have been justified, at perilous odds, of her children....

* * *

MIDWAY between sky and earth hangs a City Beautiful: Siena, *Vetus Civitas Virginis*. The town seems to have descended as a bride from airy regions, and lightly settled on the summits of three hills which it crowns with domes and clustering towers. As seen from the vineyards which clothe the slopes of the hills or with its crenellated wall and slender-necked Campanile silhouetted against the evening sky from the neighboring heights of Belcaro, the city is familiar to students of the early Italian painters. It forms the fantastic and solemn background of many a masterpiece of the *trecentisti*, and seems the only possible home, if home they can have on earth, of the glorified persons who occupy the foreground. It would create no surprise to come, while walking round the ancient walls, suddenly, at a turn in the road, on one of the sacred groups so familiarly recurrent to the memory in such an environment: often indeed one experiences a curious illusion when a passing friar happens for a moment to "compose" with cypress and crumbling archway.

Siena, once the successful rival of Florence in commerce, war, and politics, has, fortunately for the more vital interests which it represents, long desisted from such minor matters. Its worldly ruin has been complete for more than five hundred years; in truth the town has never recovered from the plague which, in the far-off days of 1348, carried off 80,000 of its population. Grassy mounds within the city walls mark the shrinking of the town since the date of their erection, and Mr. Murray gives its present population at less than 23,000. The free Ghibelline Republic which, on that memorable 4th of September 1260, defeated, with the help of Pisa, at Monte Aperto, the combined forces of the Guelf party in Tuscany, has now, after centuries of servitude to Spaniard and Austrian, to be content with the somewhat pinchbeck dignity of an Italian Prefettura. At least the architectural degradation which has overtaken Florence at the hands of her modern rulers has been as yet, in great measure, spared to Siena. Even the railway has had the grace to conceal its presence in the folds of olive which enwrap the base of the hill on which the city is set.

Once inside the rose-colored walls, as we pass up the narrow, roughly-paved streets between lines of palaces, some grim and massive like Casa Tolomei, built in 1205, others delicate specimens of Italian Gothic like the Palazzo Saracini, others again illustrating the combination of grace and strength which marked the domestic architecture of the Renaissance at its prime, like the Palazzo Piccolomini, we find ourselves in a world very remote indeed from anything with which the experience of our own utilitarian century makes us familiar. And yet, as we rub our eyes, unmistakably a world of facts, though of facts, as it were, visibly interpreted by the deeper truth of an art whose insistent presence is on all sides of us. Here is Casa Tolomei, a huge cube of rough-hewn stone stained to the color of tarnished silver with age, once the home of that Madonna Pia whose story lives for ever in the verse of Dante. Who shall distinguish between her actual tale of days and the immortal life given her by the poet? In her moment of suffering at least she has been made eternal. And not far from that ancient fortress-home, in a winding alley that can hardly be called a street, is another house of medieval Siena—no palace this time, but a small tradesman's dwelling. In the fourteenth century it belonged to Ser Giacomo Benincasa, a dyer. Part of it has now been converted into a chapel, over the door of which are inscribed the words: *Sponsae Xti Katerinae Domus*. Here, on March 5, 1347, being Palm Sunday, was born Giacomo's daughter Caterina, who still lives one of the purest glories of the Christian Church under the name of St. Catherine of Siena. More than 500 years have passed since the daughter of the Siennese dyer entered into the rest of that sublime and touching symbolism under which the Church half veils and half reveals her teaching as to the destiny of man. Another case, but how profoundly more significant than that of poor Madonna Pia, of the intertwining of the world of fact with the deeper truth of art.

St. Catherine was born at the same time as a twin-sister, who did not survive. Her parents, Giacomo and Lapa Benincasa, were simple townspeople, prosperous, and apparently deserving their reputation for piety. Lapa, the daughter of one Mucio Piagenti, a now wholly forgotten poet, bore twenty-five children to her husband, of whom thirteen only appear to have grown up. This large family lived together in the manner still obtaining in Italy, in the little house, till the death of Giacomo in 1368.

There are stirring pages enough in Christian hagiology. Who can read unmoved of the struggles towards his ideal of an Augustine or a Loyola, or of the heroic courage of a Theresa, affirming against all human odds the divinity of her mission, and justifying, after years of labor, her incredible assertions by the steadfastness of her will? There are other pages in the lives of the saints, less dramatic, it may be, but breathing, nevertheless, a naïve grace and poetry all their own: the childhood of those servants of Christ who have borne His yoke from the dawn of their days forms their charming theme. Here the blasting

illuminations of the Revelation are toned down to a soft and tender glow, in which the curves and lines of natural humanity do but seem more pathetically human. The hymn at Lauds for the Feast of the Holy Innocents represents those unconscious martyrs as playing with their palms and crowns under the very altar of Heaven:

“Vos prima Christi victima
Grex immolatorum tener
Aram sub ipsam simplices
Palma et coronis luditis!”

And so these other saintly babies play at hermits or monasteries instead of the soldiers and housekeeping beloved of more secular-minded infants. Heaven condescends to their pious revels: we are told of the Blessed Hermann Joseph, the Premonstratensian, that his infantile sports were joyously shared by the Divine Child Himself. He would be a morose pedant indeed who should wish to rationalize this white mythology. The tiny Catherine was no exception to the rest of her canonized brothers and sisters. At the age of five it was her custom on the staircase to kneel and repeat a “Hail Mary” at each step, a devotion so pleasing to the angels, that they would frequently carry her up or down without letting her feet touch the ground, much to the alarm of her mother, who confided to Father Raymond of Capua, the Dominican confessor of the family, her fears of an accident. Nor were these phenomena the only reward of her infant piety. From the day that she could walk she became very popular among her numerous relatives and her parents’ friends, who gave her the pet name of Euphrosyne, to signify the grief-dispelling effect of her conversation, and who were constantly inviting her to their houses on some pretext or other. Sent one morning on an errand to the house of her married sister Bonaventura, she was favored with a beautiful vision which, as it has an important symbolical bearing on the great task of her afterlife, I will relate in Father Raymond’s words, slightly abridging their prolixity.

“So it happened that Catherine, being arrived at the age of six, went one day with her brother Stephen, who was a little older than herself, to the house of their sister Bonaventura, who was married to one Niccolò, as has been mentioned above, in order to carry something or give some message from their mother Lapa. Their mother’s errand accomplished, while they were on the way back from their sister’s house to their own and were passing along a certain valley, called by the people Valle Piatta, the holy child, lifting her eyes, saw on the opposite side above the Church of the Preaching Friars a most beautiful room, adorned with regal magnificence, in which was seated, on an imperial throne, Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, clothed in pontifical vestments, and wearing on His head a papal tiara; with Him were the princes of the Apostles, Peter and Paul, and the holy evangelist John. Astounded at such a sight, Catherine stood still, and with fixed and immovable look, gazed, full of love, on her Saviour, who, appearing in so marvellous a manner, in order sweetly to gain her love to Himself, fixed on her the eyes of His Majesty, and, with a tender smile, lifted over her His right hand, and, making the Sign of the Holy Cross in the manner of a bishop, left with her the gift of His eternal benediction. The grace of this gift was so efficacious, that Catherine, beside herself, and transformed into Him upon whom she gazed with such love, forgetting not only the road she was on, but also herself, although naturally a timid child, stood still for a space with lifted and immovable eyes in the public road, where men and beasts were continually passing, and would certainly have continued to stand there as long as the vision lasted, had she not been violently diverted by others. But while the Lord was working these marvels, the child Stephen, leaving her standing still, continued his way downhill, thinking that she was following, but, seeing her immovable in the distance and paying no heed to his calls, he returned and pulled her with his hands, saying: ‘What are you doing here? Why do you not come?’ Then Catherine, as if waking from a heavy sleep, lowered her eyes and said: ‘Oh, if you had seen what I see, you would not distract me from so sweet a vision!’ and lifted her eyes again on high; but the vision had entirely disappeared, according to the Will of Him who had granted it, and she, not being able to endure this without pain, began with tears to reproach herself for having turned her eyes to earth.” Such was the “call” of St. Catherine of Siena, and, to a mind intent on mystical significance, the appearance of Christ, in the semblance of His Vicar, may fitly appear to symbolize the great mission of her afterlife to the Holy See.

* * *

MUCH might be said of the action of Catherine on her generation. Few individuals perhaps have ever led so active a life or have succeeded in leaving so remarkable an imprint of their personality on the events of their time. Catherine the Peacemaker reconciles warring factions of her native city and heals an international feud between Florence and the Holy See. Catherine the Consoler pours the balm of her gentle spirit into the lacerated souls of the suffering wherever she finds them, in the condemned cell or in the hospital ward. She is one of the most voluminous of letter-writers, keeping up a constant correspondence with a band of disciples, male and female, all over Italy, and last, but not least, with the distant Pope at Avignon.

Her lot was cast on evil days for the Church and the Peninsula. The trecento, the apogee of the middle ages was over. Francis and Dominic had come and gone, and though Franciscans and Dominicans remained and numbered saints among their ranks, still the first fervor of the original inspiration was a brightness that had fled. The moral state of the secular clergy was,

according to Catherine herself, too often one of the deepest degradation, while, in the absence of the Pontiff, the States of the Church were governed by papal legates, mostly men of blood and lust, who ground the starving people under their heel. Assuredly it was not from Christian bishops who would have disgraced Islam that their subjects could learn the path of peace. The Pope's residence at Avignon, the Babylonish Captivity, as it was called, may have seemed, at the time when his departure from Rome was resolved upon, a wise measure of temporary retreat before the anarchy which was raging round the city of St. Peter. But not many years passed before it became evident that Philip the Fair, the astute adviser to whose counsel—and possibly more than counsel—Clement had submitted in leaving Rome, was the only one who profited by the exile of the Pope. Whatever the truth may be about the details of Clement's election, so far as his subserviency to the French king went, he might have remained Archbishop of Bordeaux to the end of his days. He accepted for his relations costly presents from Philip; he placed the papal authority at his service in the gravely suspicious matter of the suppression of the Templars. Gradually the Holy See in exile lost its ecumenical character and became more and more the vassal of the French crown. Such a decline in its position could not fail to affect even its doctrinal prestige. It was well enough in theory to apply to the situation such maxims as *Ubi Petrus ibi Ecclesia*, or, as the Avignonese doctors paraphrased it, *Ubi Papa ibi Roma*; but, in practice, Christendom grew shy of a French Pope, living under the eye and power of the French king. The Romans, who had always treated the Pope badly, were furious when at last they had driven him away, and gratified their spite by insulting their exiled rulers. Nothing could exceed their contempt for the Popes of Avignon, who, as a matter of fact, though weak and compliant, were in their personal characters worthy ecclesiastics. They gave no credit to John XXII for his genuine zeal in the cause of learning, or the energy with which he restored ecclesiastical studies in the Western Schools. For Benedict XII, a retiring and abstemious student, they invented the phrase: *bibere papaliter*—to drink like the Pope. Clement VI they called *poco religioso*, forgetting his noble charity at the time of the plague, and also the fact that Rome herself had produced not a few popes whose lives furnished a singular commentary on the ethics of the Gospel.

The real danger ahead to Christendom was the possibility of an Italian anti-Pope who should fortify his position by recourse to the heretical elements scattered through the peninsula. Those elements were grave and numerous. The Fraticelli or Spiritual Franciscans, although crushed for the time by the iron hand of Pope Boniface, rather flourished than otherwise under persecution. These dangerous heretics had inherited a garbled version of the mysticism of Joachim of Flora, which constituted a doctrine perhaps more radically revolutionary than that of any heretics before or since. It amounted to belief in a new revelation of the Spirit, which was to supersede the dispensation of the Son as that had taken the place of the dispensation of the Father. According to the Eternal Gospel of Gerard of San Donnino, who had derived it, not without much adroit manipulation, from the writings of Abbot Joachim, the Roman Church was on the eve of destruction, and it was the duty of the *Spirituali*, the saints who had received the new dispensation, to fly from the contamination of her communion. An anti-Pope who should have rallied to his allegiance these elements of schism would have been a dangerous rival to a French Pope residing in distant Avignon, however legitimate his title. Nor was there wanting outside Italy matter for grave anxiety. Germs of heresy were fermenting north of the Alps; the preaching of Wycliffe, the semi-Islamism of the Hungarian Beghards, the Theism of the Patarini of Dalmatia, the erotic mysticism of the Adamites of Paris, indicated a widespread anarchy in the minds of Christians. Moreover, the spiritual difficulties of the Pope were complicated by his temporal preoccupations. For good or ill, it had come to be essential to the action of the Holy See that the successor of the penniless fisherman should have his place among the princes of the earth.

The papal monarchy had come about, as most things come about in this world, by what seems to have been the inevitable force of circumstances. The decay of the Imperial power in Italy due to the practical abandonment of the Western Empire—for the ruler of Constantinople lived at too great a distance to be an effective Emperor of the West—had resulted in a natural increase of secular importance to the See of Rome. To the genius of Pope Gregory I, one of the few men whom their fellows have named both Saint and Great, was due the development of the political situation thus created in Italy.

Chief and greatest of Bishops in his day was St. Gregory the Great. Seldom, if ever, has the papal dignity been sustained with such lofty enthusiasm, such sagacious political insight. Himself a Roman of Rome, *Romano di Roma*, as those who possess that privilege still call themselves today, the instinct of government was his by hereditary right. He had the defects as well as the qualities of the statesman. His theological writings, which are voluminous and verbose, are marked rather by a sort of canonized common sense than by exalted flights of spirituality. His missionary enterprise was characterized by a shrewd and gracious condescension to the limitations of human nature. Thus he counsels St. Augustine, who had consulted him as to the best means of extirpating the pagan customs of our English forefathers, to deal gently with these ancient survivals. He ruled that the celebration of the Festivals of the Saints should if possible be held at the times and places at which the people had been in the habit of meeting together to worship the gods. They would thus come to associate the new religion with their traditional merry-makings, and their conversion would be gradually, and as it were unconsciously, effected. It was a kindly and statesmanlike thought. In this way Gregory may truly be looked upon as the founder of popular Catholicism, that “pensive use and wont religion,” not assuredly in the entirety of its details Christian, but at least profoundly Catholic, as weaving together in the web of its own secular experience of man so large a proportion of the many-colored threads that have at any time attached his hopes and fears to the mysterious unknown which surrounds him. No miracle is needed to explain the political ascendancy

which such a man inevitably came to acquire in an Italy deserted by the Empire, and, but for him and the organization which depended on him, at the mercy of the invading Lombard. More and more, people came to look on the Pope as their temporal ruler no less than as their spiritual father. In many cases, indeed, his was the only government they knew. Kings and nobles had conferred much property on the Roman Church. By the end of the sixth century the Bishop of Rome held, by the right of such donations to his See, large tracts of country, not only in Italy, but also in Sicily, Corsica, Gaul, and even Asia and Africa. Gregory successfully defended his Italian property against the invaders, and came to the relief of the starving population with corn from Sicily and Africa, thus laying deep in the hearts of the people the foundations of the secular power of the Papacy.

It would be an unnecessary digression from our subject to work out in detail the stages by which the Pope came to take his place first as the Italian vicar of a distant emperor, and at length, as the result of astute statecraft and the necessities of the case, among the princes of Europe, as their chief and arbiter. So much as has been said was, however, necessary for the comprehension of the task with which Catherine measured, for the time, successfully her strength. It was given to the Popolana of Siena, by the effect of her eloquence in persuading the wavering will of the Pope to return to his See, to bring about what was, for the moment, the only possible solution of that Roman question, which, hanging perpetually round the skirts of the Bride of Christ, seems at every step to impede her victorious advance.

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NEVERTHELESS, it is neither the intrinsic importance nor the social consequences of her actions that constitute the true greatness of St. Catherine. Great ends may be pursued by essentially small means, in an aridity and narrowness of temper that goes far to discount their actual achievement. History, and in particular the history of the Church, is not wanting in such instances. Savonarola set great ends before himself—the freedom of his country and the regeneration of the state; but the spirit in which he pursued them excludes him from that Pantheon of gracious souls in which humanity enshrines its true benefactors. “Soul, as a quality of style, is a fact,” and the soul of St. Catherine’s *gesta* expressed itself in a “style” so winning, so sweetly reasonable, as to make her the dearest of friends to all who had the privilege of intimate association with her, and a permanent source of refreshment to the human spirit. She intuitively perceived life under the highest possible forms, the forms of Beauty and Love. Truth and Goodness were, she thought, means for the achievement of those two supreme ends. The sheer beauty of the soul “in a state of Grace” is a point on which she constantly dwells, hanging it as a bait before those whom she would induce to turn from evil. Similarly the ugliness of sin, as much as its wickedness, should warn us of its true nature. Love, that love of man for man which, in deepest truth, *is*, in the words of the writer of the First Epistle of St. John, God Himself, is, at once, the highest achievement of man and his supreme and satisfying beatitude. The Symbols of Catholic theology were to her the necessary and fitting means of transit, so to speak. See, in the following pages, the fine allegory of the Bridge of the Sacred Humanity, of the soul in *viâ* on its dusty pilgrimage toward those gleaming heights of vision. “Truth” was to her the handmaid of the spiritualized imagination, not, as too often in these days of the twilight of the soul, its tyrant and its gaoler. Many of those who pass lives of unremitting preoccupation with the problems of truth and goodness are wearied and cumbered with much serving. We honor them, and rightly; but if they have nothing but this to offer us, our hearts do not run to meet them, as they fly to the embrace of those rare souls who inhabit a serener, more pellucid atmosphere. Among these spirits of the air, St. Catherine has taken a permanent and foremost place. She is among the few guides of humanity who have the perfect manner, the irresistible attractiveness, of that positive purity of heart, which not only sees God, but diffuses Him, as by some natural law of refraction, over the hearts of men. The Divine nuptials, about which the mystics tell us so much, have been accomplished in her, Nature and Grace have lain down together, and the mysteries of her religion seem but the natural expression of a perfectly balanced character, an unquenchable love and a deathless will.

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THE *Dialogue of St. Catherine of Siena* was dictated to her secretaries by the Saint in ecstasy. Apart from the extraordinary circumstances of its production, this work has a special interest.

The composition of the Siennese dyer’s daughter, whose will, purified and sublimated by prayer, imposed itself on popes and princes, is an almost unique specimen of what may be called “ecclesiastical” mysticism; for its special value lies in the fact that from first to last it is nothing more than a mystical exposition of the creeds taught to every child in the Catholic poor-schools. Her insight is sometimes very wonderful. How subtle, for instance, is the analysis of the state of the “worldly man” who loves God for his own pleasure or profit! The special snares of the devout are cut through by the keen logic of one who has experienced and triumphed over them. Terrible, again, is the retribution prophesied to the “unworthy ministers of the Blood.”

And so every well-known form of Christian life, healthy or parasitic, is treated of, detailed, analyzed incisively, remorselessly, and then subsumed under the general conception of God’s infinite loving-kindness and mercy.

The great mystics have usually taken as their starting-point what, to most, is the goal hardly to be reached; their own treatment of the preliminary stages of spirituality is frequently conventional and *jejune*. Compare, for instance, the first book with the two succeeding ones, of Ruysbrock’s *Ornement des Noces spirituelles*, that unique breviary of the Christian

Platonician. Another result of their having done so is that, with certain noble exceptions, the literature of this subject has fallen into the hands of a class of writers, or rather purveyors, well-intentioned no doubt, but not endowed with the higher spiritual and mental faculties, whom it is not unfair to describe as the *feuilletonistes* of piety. Such works, brightly bound, are appropriately exposed for sale in the Roman shop-windows, among the gaudy *objets de religion* they so much resemble. To keep healthy and raise the tone of devotional literature is surely an eighth spiritual work of mercy, St. Philip Neri's advice in the matter was to prefer those writers whose names were preceded by the title of Saint. In the *Dialogo* we have a great saint, one of the most extraordinary women who ever lived, treating, in a manner so simple and familiar as at times to become almost colloquial, of the elements of practical Christianity. Passages occur frequently of lofty eloquence, and also of such literary perfection that this book is held by critics to be one of the classics of the age and land which produced Boccaccio and Petrarch. Today, in the streets of Siena, the same Tuscan idiom can be heard, hardly altered since the days of St. Catherine.

One word as to the translation. I have almost always followed the text of Gigli, a learned Siennese ecclesiastic, who edited the complete works of St. Catherine in the last century. His is the latest edition printed of the *Dialogo*. Once or twice I have preferred the *cinquecento* Venetian editor. My aim has been to translate as literally as possible, and at the same time to preserve the characteristic rhythm of the sentences, so suggestive in its way of the sing-song articulation of the Siennese of today. St. Catherine has no style as such; she introduces a metaphor and forgets it; the sea, a vine, and a plough will often appear in the same sentence, sometimes in the same phrase. In such cases I have occasionally taken the liberty of adhering to the first simile when the confusion of metaphor in the original involves hopeless obscurity of expression.

Viareggio, September 1906

A TREATISE OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE

How a soul, elevated by desire of the honor of God, and of the salvation of her neighbors, exercising herself in humble prayer, after she had seen the union of the soul, through love, with God, asked of God four requests.

THE SOUL, who is lifted by a very great and yearning desire for the honor of God and the salvation of souls, begins by exercising herself, for a certain space of time, in the ordinary virtues, remaining in the cell of self-knowledge, in order to know better the goodness of God towards her. This she does because knowledge must precede love, and only when she has attained love, can she strive to follow and to clothe herself with the truth. But, in no way, does the creature receive such a taste of the truth, or so brilliant a light therefrom, as by means of humble and continuous prayer, founded on knowledge of herself and of God; because prayer, exercising her in the above way, unites with God the soul that follows the footprints of Christ crucified, and thus, by desire and affection, and union of love, makes her another Himself. Christ would seem to have meant this, when He said: *To him who will love Me and will observe. My commandment, will I manifest Myself; and he shall be one thing with Me and I with him.* In several places we find similar words, by which we can see that it is, indeed, through the effect of love, that the soul becomes another Himself. That this may be seen more clearly, I will mention what I remember having heard from a handmaid of God, namely, that, when she was lifted up in prayer, with great elevation of mind, God was not wont to conceal, from the eye of her intellect, the love which He had for His servants, but rather to manifest it; and, that among other things, He used to say: “Open the eye of thy intellect, and gaze into Me, and thou shalt see the beauty of My rational creature. And look at those creatures who, among the beauties which I have given to the soul, creating her in My image and similitude, are clothed with the nuptial garment (that is, the garment of love), adorned with many virtues, by which they are united with Me through love. And yet I tell thee, if thou shouldest ask Me, who these are, I should reply” (said the sweet and amorous Word of God) “they are another Myself, inasmuch as they have lost and denied their own will, and are clothed with Mine, are united to Mine, are conformed to Mine.” It is therefore true, indeed, that the soul unites herself with God by the affection of love.

So, that soul, wishing to know and follow the truth more manfully, and lifting her desires first for herself—for she considered that a soul could not be of use, whether in doctrine, example, or prayer, to her neighbor, if she did not first profit herself, that is, if she did not acquire virtue in herself—addressed four requests to the Supreme and Eternal Father. The first was for herself; the second for the reformation of the Holy Church; the third a general prayer for the whole world, and in particular for the peace of Christians who rebel, with much lewdness and persecution, against the Holy Church; in the fourth and last, she besought the Divine Providence to provide for things in general, and in particular, for a certain case with which she was concerned.

How the desire of this soul grew when God showed her the neediness of the world.

THIS desire was great and continuous, but grew much more, when the First Truth showed her the neediness of the world, and in what a tempest of offense against God it lay. And she had understood this the better from a letter, which she had received from the spiritual Father of her soul, in which he explained to her the penalties and intolerable dolor caused by offenses against God, and the loss of souls, and the persecutions of Holy Church.

All this lighted the fire of her holy desire with grief for the offenses, and with the joy of the lively hope, with which she waited for God to provide against such great evils. And, since the soul seems, in such communion, sweetly to bind herself fast within herself and with God, and knows better His truth, inasmuch as the soul is then in God, and God in the soul, as the fish is in the sea, and the sea in the fish, she desired the arrival of the morning (for the morrow was a feast of Mary) in order to hear Mass. And, when the morning came, and the hour of the Mass, she sought with anxious desire her accustomed place; and, with a great knowledge of herself, being ashamed of her own imperfection, appearing to herself to be the cause of all the evil that was happening throughout the world, conceiving a hatred and displeasure against herself, and a feeling of holy justice, with which knowledge, hatred, and justice, she purified the stains which seemed to her to cover her guilty soul, she said: “O Eternal Father, I accuse myself before Thee, in order that Thou mayest punish me for my sins in this finite life, and, inasmuch as my sins are the cause of the sufferings which my neighbor must endure, I implore Thee, in Thy kindness, to punish them in my person.”

How finite works are not sufficient for punishment or recompense without the perpetual affection of love.

THEN, the Eternal Truth seized and drew more strongly to Himself her desire, doing as He did in the Old Testament, for when the sacrifice was offered to God, a fire descended and drew to Him the sacrifice that was acceptable to Him; so did the sweet Truth to that soul, in sending down the fire of the clemency of the Holy Spirit, seizing the sacrifice of desire that she made of herself, saying: "Dost thou not know, dear daughter, that all the sufferings, which the soul endures, or can endure, in this life, are insufficient to punish one smallest fault, because the offense, being done to Me, who am the Infinite Good, calls for an infinite satisfaction? However, I wish that thou shouldest know, that not all the pains that are given to men in this life are given as punishments, but as corrections, in order to chastise a son when he offends; though it is true that both the guilt and the penalty can be expiated by the desire of the soul, that is, by true contrition, not through the finite pain endured, but through the infinite desire; because God, who is infinite, wishes for infinite love and infinite grief. Infinite grief I wish from My creature in two ways: in one way, through her sorrow for her own sins, which she has committed against Me her Creator; in the other way, through her sorrow for the sins which she sees her neighbors commit against Me. Of such as these, inasmuch as they have infinite desire, that is, are joined to Me by an affection of love, and therefore grieve when they offend Me, or see Me offended, their every pain, whether spiritual or corporeal, from wherever it may come, receives infinite merit, and satisfies for a guilt which deserved an infinite penalty, although their works are finite and done in finite time; but, inasmuch as they possess the virtue of desire, and sustain their suffering with desire, and contrition, and infinite displeasure against their guilt, their pain is held worthy. Paul explained this when he said: *If I had the tongues of angels, and if I knew the things of the future and gave my body to be burned, and have not love, it would be worth nothing to me.* The glorious Apostle thus shows that finite works are not valid, either as punishment or recompense, without the condiment of the affection of love."

How desire and contrition of heart satisfies, both for the guilt and the penalty in oneself and in others; and how sometimes it satisfies for the guilt only, and not the penalty.

"**I**HAVE shown thee, dearest daughter, that the guilt is not punished in this finite time by any pain which is sustained purely as such. And I say, that the guilt is punished by the pain which is endured through the desire, love, and contrition of the heart; not by virtue of the pain, but by virtue of the desire of the soul; inasmuch as desire and every virtue is of value, and has life in itself, through Christ crucified, My Only-begotten Son, in so far as the soul has drawn her love from Him, and virtuously follows His virtues, that is, His footprints. In this way, and in no other, are virtues of value, and in this way, pains satisfy for the fault, by the sweet and intimate love acquired in the knowledge of My goodness, and in the bitterness and contrition of heart acquired by knowledge of oneself and one's own thoughts. And this knowledge generates a hatred and displeasure against sin, and against the soul's own sensuality, through which, she deems herself worthy of pains and unworthy of reward."

The sweet Truth continued: "See how, by contrition of the heart, together with love, with true patience, and with true humility, deeming themselves worthy of pain and unworthy of reward, such souls endure the patient humility in which consists the above-mentioned satisfaction. Thou askest me, then, for pains, so that I may receive satisfaction for the offenses, which are done against Me by My creatures, and thou further askest the will to know and love Me, who am the Supreme Truth. Wherefore I reply that this is the way, if thou wilt arrive at a perfect knowledge and enjoyment of Me, the Eternal Truth, that thou shouldest never go outside the knowledge of thyself, and, by humbling thyself in the valley of humility, thou wilt know Me and thyself, from which knowledge thou wilt draw all that is necessary. No virtue, my daughter, can have life in itself except through charity, and humility, which is the foster-mother and nurse of charity. In self-knowledge, then, thou wilt humble thyself, seeing that, in thyself, thou dost not even exist; for thy very being, as thou wilt learn, is derived from Me, since I have loved both thee and others before you were in existence; and that, through the ineffable love which I had for you, wishing to re-create you to Grace, I have washed you, and re-created you in the Blood of My Only-begotten Son, spilt with so great a fire of love. This Blood teaches the truth to him, who, by self-knowledge, dissipates the cloud of self-love, and in no other way can he learn. Then the soul will inflame herself in this knowledge of Me with an ineffable love, through which love she continues in constant pain; not, however, a pain which afflicts or dries up the soul, but one which rather fattens her; for since she has known My truth, and her own faults, and the ingratitude of men, she endures intolerable suffering, grieving because she loves Me; for, if she did not love Me, she would not be obliged to do so; whence it follows immediately, that it is right for thee, and My other servants who have learnt My truth in this way, to sustain, even unto death, many tribulations and injuries and insults in word and deed, for the glory and praise of My Name; thus wilt thou endure and suffer pains. Do thou, therefore, and My other servants, carry yourselves with true patience, with grief for your sins, and with love of virtue for the glory and praise of My Name. If thou attest thus, I will satisfy for thy sins, and for those of My other servants, inasmuch as the pains which thou wilt endure will be sufficient, through the virtue of love, for satisfaction and reward, both in thee and in others. In thyself thou wilt receive the fruit of life, when the stains of thy ignorance are effaced, and I shall not remember that thou ever didst offend Me. In others I will satisfy through the love and affection which thou hast to Me, and I will give to them according to the disposition with which they will receive My gifts. In particular, to those who dispose themselves, humbly and with reverence, to receive the doctrine of My servants, will I remit both guilt and penalty, since they will thus come to true knowledge and contrition for

their sins. So that, by means of prayer, and their desire of serving Me, they receive the fruit of grace, receiving it humbly in greater or lesser degree, according to the extent of their exercise of virtue and grace in general. I say then, that, through thy desires, they will receive remission for their sins. See, however, the condition, namely, that their obstinacy should not be so great in their despair as to condemn them through contempt of the Blood, which, with such sweetness, has restored them.

“What fruit do they receive?

“The fruit which I destine for them, constrained by the prayers of My servants, is that I give them light, and that I wake up in them the hound of conscience, and make them smell the odor of virtue, and take delight in the conversation of My servants.

“Sometimes I allow the world to show them what it is, so that, feeling its diverse and various passions, they may know how little stability it has, and may come to lift their desire beyond it, and seek their native country, which is the Eternal Life. And so I draw them by these, and by many other ways, for the eye cannot see, nor the tongue relate, nor the heart think, how many are the roads and ways which I use, through love alone, to lead them back to grace, so that My truth may be fulfilled in them. I am constrained to do so by that inestimable love of Mine, by which I created them, and by the love, desire, and grief of My servants, since I am no despiser of their tears, and sweat, and humble prayers; rather I accept them, inasmuch as I am He who gives them this love for the good of souls and grief for their loss. But I do not, in general, grant to these others, for whom they pray, satisfaction for the penalty due to them, but, only for their guilt, since they are not disposed, on their side, to receive, with perfect love, My love, and that of My servants. They do not receive their grief with bitterness, and perfect contrition for the sins they have committed, but with imperfect love and contrition, wherefore they have not, as others, remission of the penalty, but only of the guilt; because such complete satisfaction requires proper dispositions on both sides, both in him that gives and him that receives. Wherefore, since they are imperfect, they receive imperfectly the perfection of the desires of those who offer them to Me, for their sakes, with suffering; and, inasmuch as I told thee that they do receive remission, this is indeed the truth, that, by that way which I have told thee, that is, by the light of conscience, and by other things, satisfaction is made for their guilt; for, beginning to learn, they vomit forth the corruption of their sins, and so receive the gift of grace.

“These are they who are in a state of ordinary charity, wherefore, if they have trouble, they receive it in the guise of correction, and do not resist overmuch the clemency of the Holy Spirit, but, coming out of their sin, they receive the life of grace. But if, like fools, they are ungrateful, and ignore Me and the labors of My servants done for them, that which was given them, through mercy, turns to their own ruin and judgment, not through defect of mercy, nor through defect of him who implored the mercy for the ingrate, but solely through the man’s own wretchedness and hardness, with which, with the hands of his free will, he has covered his heart, as it were, with a diamond, which, if it be not broken by the Blood, can in no way be broken. And yet, I say to thee, that, in spite of his hardness of heart, he can use his free will while he has time, praying for the Blood of My Son, and let him with his own hand apply It to the diamond over his heart and shiver it, and he will receive the imprint of the Blood which has been paid for him. But, if he delays until the time be past, he has no remedy, because he has not used the dowry which I gave him, giving him memory, so as to remember My benefits; intellect, so as to see and know the truth; affection, so that he should love Me, the Eternal Truth, whom he would have known through the use of his intellect. This is the dowry which I have given you all, and which ought to render fruit to Me, the Father; but, if a man barters and sells it to the devil, the devil, if he choose, has a right to seize on everything that he has acquired in this life. And, filling his memory with the delights of sin, and with the recollection of shameful pride, avarice, self-love, hatred, and unkindness to his neighbors (being also a persecutor of My servants), with these miseries, he has obscured his intellect by his disordinate will. Let such as these receive the eternal pains, with their horrible stench, inasmuch as they have not satisfied for their sins with contrition and displeasure of their guilt. Now, therefore, thou hast understood how suffering satisfies for guilt by perfect contrition, not through the finite pain; and such as have this contrition in perfection satisfy not only for the guilt, but also for the penalty which follows the guilt, as I have already said when speaking in general; and if they satisfy for the guilt alone, that is, if, having abandoned mortal sin, they receive grace, and have not sufficient contrition and love to satisfy for the penalty also, they go to the pains of Purgatory, passing through the second and last means of satisfaction.

“So thou seest that satisfaction is made, through the desire of the soul united to Me, who am the Infinite Good, in greater or lesser degree, according to the measure of love, obtained by the desire and prayer of the recipient. Wherefore, with that very same measure with which a man measures to Me, dost he receive in himself the measure of My goodness. Labor, therefore, to increase the fire of thy desire, and let not a moment pass without crying to Me with humble voice, or without continual prayers before Me for thy neighbors. I say this to thee and to the father of thy soul, whom I have given thee on earth. Bear yourselves with manful courage, and make yourselves dead to all your own sensuality.”

How very pleasing to God is the willing desire to suffer for Him.

“**V**ERY pleasing to Me, dearest daughter, is the willing desire to bear every pain and fatigue, even unto death, for the salvation of souls, for the more the soul endures, the more she shows that she loves Me; loving Me she comes to know more of My truth, and the more she knows, the more pain and intolerable grief she feels at the offenses committed against Me. Thou didst ask Me to sustain thee, and to punish the faults of others in thee, and thou didst not remark that thou wast really

asking for love, light, and knowledge of the truth, since I have already told thee that, by the increase of love, grows grief and pain, wherefore he that grows in love grows in grief. Therefore, I say to you all, that you should ask, and it will be given you, for I deny nothing to him who asks of Me in truth. Consider that the love of divine charity is so closely joined in the soul with perfect patience, that neither can leave the soul without the other. For this reason (if the soul elect to love Me) she should elect to endure pains for Me in whatever mode or circumstance I may send them to her. Patience cannot be proved in any other way than by suffering, and patience is united with love as has been said. Therefore bear yourselves with manly courage, for, unless you do so, you will not prove yourselves to be spouses of My Truth, and faithful children, nor of the company of those who relish the taste of My honor, and the salvation of souls."

How every virtue and every defect is obtained by means of our neighbor.

"I WISH also that thou shouldest know that every virtue is obtained by means of thy neighbor, and likewise, every defect; he, therefore, who stands in hatred of Me, does an injury to his neighbor, and to himself, who is his own chief neighbor, and this injury is both general and particular. It is general because you are obliged to love your neighbor as yourself, and loving him, you ought to help him spiritually, with prayer, counselling him with words, and assisting him both spiritually and temporally, according to the need in which he may be, at least with your goodwill if you have nothing else. A man therefore, who does not love, does not help him, and thereby does himself an injury; for he cuts off from himself grace, and injures his neighbor, by depriving him of the benefit of the prayers and of the sweet desires that he is bound to offer for him to Me. Thus, every act of help that he performs should proceed from the charity which he has through love of Me. And every evil also, is done by means of his neighbor, for, if he does not love Me, he cannot be in charity with his neighbor; and thus, all evils derive from the soul's deprivation of love of Me and her neighbor; whence, inasmuch as such a man does no good, it follows that he must do evil. To whom does he evil? First of all to himself, and then to his neighbor, not against Me, for no evil can touch Me, except insofar as I count done to Me that which he does to himself. To himself he does the injury of sin, which deprives him of grace, and worse than this he cannot do to his neighbor. Him he injures in not paying him the debt, which he owes him, of love, with which he ought to help him by means of prayer and holy desire offered to Me for him. This is an assistance which is owed in general to every rational creature; but its usefulness is more particular when it is done to those who are close at hand, under your eyes, as to whom, I say, you are all obliged to help one another by word and doctrine, and the example of good works, and in every other respect in which your neighbor may be seen to be in need; counselling him exactly as you would yourselves, without any passion of self-love; and he (a man not loving God) does not do this, because he has no love towards his neighbor; and, by not doing it, he does him, as thou seest, a special injury. And he does him evil, not only by not doing him the good that he might do him, but by doing him a positive injury and a constant evil. In this way sin causes a physical and a mental injury. The mental injury is already done when the sinner has conceived pleasure in the idea of sin, and hatred of virtue, that is, pleasure from sensual self-love, which has deprived him of the affection of love which he ought to have towards Me, and his neighbor, as has been said. And, after he has conceived, he brings forth one sin after another against his neighbor, according to the diverse ways which may please his perverse sensual will. Sometimes it is seen that he brings forth cruelty, and that both in general and in particular.

"His general cruelty is to see himself and other creatures in danger of death and damnation through privation of grace, and so cruel is he that he reminds neither himself nor others of the love of virtue and hatred of vice. Being thus cruel he may wish to extend his cruelty still further, that is, not content with not giving an example of virtue, the villain also usurps the office of the demons, tempting, according to his power, his fellow-creatures to abandon virtue for vice; this is cruelty towards his neighbors, for he makes himself an instrument to destroy life and to give death. Cruelty towards the body has its origin in cupidity, which not only prevents a man from helping his neighbor, but causes him to seize the goods of others, robbing the poor creatures; sometimes this is done by the arbitrary use of power, and at other times by cheating and fraud, his neighbor being forced to redeem, to his own loss, his own goods, and often indeed his own person.

"Oh, miserable vice of cruelty, which will deprive the man who practices it of all mercy, unless he turn to kindness and benevolence towards his neighbor!

"Sometimes the sinner brings forth insults on which often follows murder; sometimes also impurity against the person of his neighbor, by which he becomes a brute beast full of stench, and in this case he does not poison one only, but whoever approaches him, with love or in conversation, is poisoned.

"Against whom does pride bring forth evils? Against the neighbor, through love of one's own reputation, whence comes hatred of the neighbor, reputing oneself to be greater than he; and in this way is injury done to him. And if a man be in a position of authority, he produces also injustice and cruelty and becomes a retailer of the flesh of men. Oh, dearest daughter, grieve for the offense against Me, and weep over these corpses, so that, by prayer, the bands of their death may be loosened!

"See now, that, in all places and in all kinds of people, sin is always produced against the neighbor, and through his medium; in no other way could sin ever be committed either secret or open. A secret sin is when you deprive your neighbor of that which you ought to give him; an open sin is where you perform positive acts of sin, as I have related to thee. It is,

therefore, indeed the truth that every sin done against Me, is done through the medium of the neighbor."

How virtues are accomplished by means of our neighbor, and how it is that virtues differ to such an extent in creatures.

"I HAVE told thee how all sins are accomplished by means of thy neighbor, through the principles which I exposed to thee, that is, because men are deprived of the affection of love, which gives light to every virtue, In the same way self-love, which destroys charity and affection towards the neighbor, is the principle and foundation of every evil. All scandals, hatred, cruelty, and every sort of trouble proceed from this perverse root of self-love, which has poisoned the entire world, and weakened the mystical body of the Holy Church, and the universal body of the believers in the Christian religion; and, therefore, I said to thee, that it was in the neighbor, that is to say in the love of him, that all virtues were founded; and, truly indeed did I say to thee, that charity gives life to all the virtues, because no virtue can be obtained without charity, which is the pure love of Me.

"Wherefore, when the soul knows herself, as we have said above, she finds humility and hatred of her own sensual passion, for she learns the perverse law, which is bound up in her members, and which ever fights against the spirit. And, therefore, arising with hatred of her own sensuality, crushing it under the heel of reason, with great earnestness, she discovers in herself the bounty of My goodness, through the many benefits which she has received from Me, all of which she considers again in herself. She attributes to Me, through humility, the knowledge which she has obtained of herself, knowing that, by My grace, I have drawn her out of darkness and lifted her up into the light of true knowledge. When she has recognized My goodness, she loves it without any medium, and yet at the same time with a medium, that is to say, without the medium of herself or of any advantage accruing to herself, and with the medium of virtue, which she has conceived through love of Me, because she sees that, in no other way, can she become grateful and acceptable to Me, but by conceiving hatred of sin and love of virtue; and, when she has thus conceived by the affection of love, she immediately is delivered of fruit for her neighbor, because, in no other way, can she act out the truth she has conceived in herself, but, loving Me in truth, in the same truth she serves her neighbor.

"And it cannot be otherwise, because love of Me and of her neighbor are one and the same thing, and, so far as the soul loves Me, she loves her neighbor, because love towards him issues from Me. This is the means which I have given you, that you may exercise and prove your virtue therewith; because, inasmuch as you can do Me no profit, you should do it to your neighbor. This proves that you possess Me by grace in your soul, producing much fruit for your neighbor and making prayers to Me, seeking with sweet and amorous desire My honor and the salvation of souls. The soul, enamored of My truth, never ceases to serve the whole world in general, and more or less in a particular case according to the disposition of the recipient and the ardent desire of the donor, as I have shown above, when I declared to thee that the endurance of suffering alone, without desire, was not sufficient to punish a fault.

"When she has discovered the advantage of this unitive love in Me, by means of which, she truly loves herself, extending her desire for the salvation of the whole world, thus coming to the aid of its neediness, she strives, inasmuch as she has done good to herself by the conception of virtue, from which she has drawn the life of grace, to fix her eye on the needs of her neighbor in particular. Wherefore, when she has discovered, through the affection of love, the state of all rational creatures in general, she helps those who are at hand, according to the various graces which I have entrusted to her to administer; one she helps with doctrine, that is, with words, giving sincere counsel without any respect of persons, another with the example of a good life, and this indeed all give to their neighbor, the edification of a holy and honorable life. These are the virtues, and many others, too many to enumerate, which are brought forth in the love of the neighbor; but, although I have given them in such a different way, that is to say not all to one, but to one, one virtue, and to another, another, it so happens that it is impossible to have one, without having them all, because all the virtues are bound together. Wherefore, learn, that, in many cases I give one virtue, to be as it were the chief of the others, that is to say, to one I will give principally love, to another justice, to another humility, to one a lively faith, to another prudence or temperance, or patience, to another fortitude. These, and many other virtues, I place, indifferently, in the souls of many creatures; it happens, therefore, that the particular one so placed in the soul becomes the principal object of its virtue; the soul disposing herself, for her chief conversation, to this rather than to other virtues, and, by the effect of this virtue, the soul draws to herself all the other virtues, which, as has been said, are all bound together in the affection of love; and so with many gifts and graces of virtue, and not only in the case of spiritual things but also of temporal. I use the word temporal for the things necessary to the physical life of man; all these I have given indifferently, and I have not placed them all in one soul, in order that man should, perforce, have material for love of his fellow. I could easily have created men possessed of all that they should need both for body and soul, but I wish that one should have need of the other, and that they should be My ministers to administer the graces and the gifts that they have received from Me. Whether man will or no, he cannot help making an act of love. It is true, however, that that act, unless made through love of Me, profits him nothing so far as grace is concerned. See then, that I have made men My ministers, and placed them in diverse stations and various ranks, in order that they may make use of the virtue of love.

"Wherefore, I show you that in My house are many mansions, and that I wish for no other thing than love, for in the love of Me is fulfilled and completed the love of the neighbor, and the law observed. For he, only, can be of use in his state of life, who is bound to Me with this love."

How virtues are proved and fortified by their contraries.

"**U**P TO the present, I have taught thee how a man may serve his neighbor, and manifest, by that service, the love which he has towards Me.

"Now I wish to tell thee further, that a man proves his patience on his neighbor, when he receives injuries from him.

"Similarly, he proves his humility on a proud man, his faith on an infidel, his true hope on one who despairs, his justice on the unjust, his kindness on the cruel, his gentleness and benignity on the irascible. Good men produce and prove all their virtues on their neighbor, just as perverse men all their vices; thus, if thou consider well, humility is proved on pride in this way. The humble man extinguishes pride, because a proud man can do no harm to a humble one; neither can the infidelity of a wicked man, who neither loves Me, nor hopes in Me, when brought forth against one who is faithful to Me, do him any harm; his infidelity does not diminish the faith or the hope of him who has conceived his faith and hope through love of Me, it rather fortifies it, and proves it in the love he feels for his neighbor. For, he sees that the infidel is unfaithful, because he is without hope in Me, and in My servant, because he does not love Me, placing his faith and hope rather in his own sensuality, which is all that he loves. My faithful servant does not leave him because he does not faithfully love Me, or because he does not constantly seek, with hope in Me, for his salvation, inasmuch as he sees clearly the causes of his infidelity and lack of hope. The virtue of faith is proved in these and other ways. Wherefore, to those who need the proof of it, My servant proves his faith in himself and in his neighbor, and so, justice is not diminished by the wicked man's injustice, but is rather proved, that is to say, the justice of a just man. Similarly, the virtues of patience, benignity, and kindness manifest themselves in a time of wrath by the same sweet patience in My servants, and envy, vexation, and hatred demonstrate their love, and hunger and desire for the salvation of souls. I say, also, to thee, that, not only is virtue proved in those who render good for evil, but, that many times a good man gives back fiery coals of love, which dispel the hatred and rancor of heart of the angry, and so from hatred often comes benevolence, and that this is by virtue of the love and perfect patience which is in him, who sustains the anger of the wicked, bearing and supporting his defects. If thou wilt observe the virtues of fortitude and perseverance, these virtues are proved by the long endurance of the injuries and detractions of wicked men, who, whether by injuries or by flattery, constantly endeavor to turn a man aside from following the road and the doctrine of truth. Wherefore, in all these things, the virtue of fortitude conceived within the soul, perseveres with strength, and, in addition proves itself externally upon the neighbor, as I have said to thee; and, if fortitude were not able to make that good proof of itself, being tested by many contrarieties, it would not be a serious virtue founded in truth."

A TREATISE OF DISCRETION

How the affection should not place reliance chiefly on penance, but rather on virtues; and how discretion receives life from humility, and renders to each man his due.

“THESE are the holy and sweet works which I seek from My servants; these are the proved intrinsic virtues of the soul, as I have told thee. They not only consist of those virtues which are done by means of the body, that is, with an exterior act, or with diverse and varied penances, which are the instruments of virtue; works of penance performed alone without the above-mentioned virtues would please Me little; often, indeed, if the soul perform not her penance with discretion, that is to say, if her affection be placed principally in the penance she has undertaken, her perfection will be impeded; she should rather place reliance on the affection of love, with a holy hatred of herself, accompanied by true humility and perfect patience, together with the other intrinsic virtues of the soul, with hunger and desire for My honor and the salvation of souls. For these virtues demonstrate that the will is dead, and continually slays its own sensuality through the affection of love of virtue. With this discretion, then, should the soul perform her penance, that is, she should place her principal affection in virtue rather than in penance. Penance should be but the means to increase virtue according to the needs of the individual, and according to what the soul sees she can do in the measure of her own possibility. Otherwise, if the soul places her foundation on penance she will contaminate her own perfection, because her penance will not be done in the light of knowledge of herself and of My goodness, with discretion, and she will not seize hold of My truth; neither loving that which I love, nor hating that which I hate. This virtue of discretion is no other than a true knowledge which the soul should have of herself and of Me, and in this knowledge is virtue rooted. Discretion is the only child of self-knowledge, and, wedding with charity, has indeed many other descendants, as a tree which has many branches; but that which gives life to the tree, to its branches, and its root, is the ground of humility, in which it is planted, which humility is the foster-mother and nurse of charity, by whose means this tree remains in the perpetual calm of discretion. Because otherwise the tree would not produce the virtue of discretion, or any fruit of life, if it were not planted in the virtue of humility, because humility proceeds from self-knowledge. And I have already said to thee, that the root of discretion is a real knowledge of self and of My goodness, by which the soul immediately, and discreetly, renders to each one his due—chiefly to Me in rendering praise and glory to My Name, and in referring to Me the graces and the gifts which she sees and knows she has received from Me; and rendering to herself that which she sees herself to have merited, knowing that she does not even exist of herself, and attributing to Me, and not to herself, her being, which she knows she has received by grace from Me, and every other grace which she has received besides.

“And she seems to herself to be ungrateful for so many benefits, and negligent, in that she has not made the most of her time, and the graces she has received, and so seems to herself worthy of suffering; wherefore she becomes odious and displeasing to herself through her guilt. And this founds the virtue of discretion on knowledge of self, that is, on true humility, for, were this humility not in the soul, the soul would be indiscreet, indiscretion being founded on pride, as discretion is on humility.

“An indiscreet soul robs Me of the honor due to Me, and attributes it to herself, through vainglory, and that which is really her own she imputes to Me, grieving and murmuring concerning My mysteries, with which I work in her soul and in those of My other creatures; wherefore everything in Me and in her neighbor is cause of scandal to her. Contrariwise those who possess the virtue of discretion. For, when they have rendered what is due to Me and to themselves, they proceed to render to their neighbor their principal debt of love, and of humble and continuous prayer, which all should pay to each other, and further, the debt of doctrine, and example of a holy and honorable life, counselling and helping others according to their needs for salvation, as I said to thee above. Whatever rank a man be in, whether that of a noble, a prelate, or a servant, if he have this virtue, everything that he does to his neighbor is done discreetly and lovingly, because these virtues are bound and mingled together, and both planted in the ground of humility which proceeds from self-knowledge.”

A parable showing how love, humility, and discretion are united; and how the soul should conform herself to this parable.

“DOST thou know how these three virtues stand together? It is as if a circle were drawn on the surface of the earth, and a tree, with an off-shoot joined to its side, grew in the centre of the circle. The tree is nourished in the earth contained in the diameter of the circle, for if the tree were out of the earth it would die, and give no fruit. Now, consider, in the same way, that the soul is a tree existing by love, and that it can live by nothing else than love; and, that if this soul have not in very truth the divine love of perfect charity, she cannot produce fruit of life, but only of death. It is necessary then, that the root of this tree, that is the affection of the soul, should grow in and issue from the circle of true self-knowledge which is contained in Me, who have neither beginning nor end, like the circumference of the circle, for, turn as thou wilt within a circle, inasmuch as the

circumference has neither end nor beginning, thou always remainest within it.

"This knowledge of thyself and of Me is found in the earth of true humility, which is as wide as the diameter of the circle, that is as the knowledge of self and of Me (for, otherwise, the circle would not be without end and beginning, but would have its beginning in knowledge of self, and its end in confusion, if this knowledge were not contained in Me). Then the tree of love feeds itself on humility, bringing forth from its side the off-shoot of true discretion, in the way that I have already told thee, from the heart of the tree, that is the affection of love which is in the soul, and the patience, which proves that I am in the soul and the soul in Me. This tree then, so sweetly planted, produces fragrant blossoms of virtue, with many scents of great variety, inasmuch as the soul renders fruit of grace and of utility to her neighbor, according to the zeal of those who come to receive fruit from My servants; and to Me she renders the sweet odor of glory and praise to My Name, and so fulfills the object of her creation.

"In this way, therefore, she reaches the term of her being, that is Myself, her God, who am Eternal Life. And these fruits cannot be taken from her without her will, inasmuch as they are all flavored with discretion, because they are all united, as has been said above."

How penance and other corporal exercises are to be taken as instruments for arriving at virtue, and not as the principal affection of the soul; and of the light of discretion in various other modes and operations.

"**T**HESSE are the fruits and the works which I seek from the soul, the proving, namely, of virtue in the time of need. And yet some time ago, if thou remember, when thou wert desirous of doing great penance for My sake, asking, 'What can I do to endure suffering for Thee, oh Lord?' I replied to thee, speaking in thy mind, 'I take delight in few words and many works.' I wished to show thee that he who merely calls on me with the sound of words, saying: 'Lord, Lord, I would do something for Thee,' and he, who desires for My sake to mortify his body with many penances, and not his own will, did not give Me much pleasure; but that I desired the manifold works of manly endurance with patience, together with the other virtues, which I have mentioned to thee above, intrinsic to the soul, all of which must be in activity in order to obtain fruits worthy of grace. All other works, founded on any other principle than this, I judge to be a mere calling with words, because they are finite works, and I, who am Infinite, seek infinite works, that is an infinite perfection of love.

"I wish therefore that the works of penance, and of other corporal exercises, should be observed merely as means, and not as the fundamental affection of the soul. For, if the principal affection of the soul were placed in penance, I should receive a finite thing like a word, which, when it has issued from the mouth, is no more, unless it have issued with affection of the soul, which conceives and brings forth virtue in truth; that is, unless the finite operation, which I have called a word, should be joined with the affection or love, in which case it would be grateful and pleasant to Me. And this is because such a work would not be alone, but accompanied by true discretion, using corporal works as means, and not as the principal foundation; for it would not be becoming that that principal foundation should be placed in penance only, or in any exterior corporal act, such works being finite, since they are done in finite time, and also because it is often profitable that the creature omit them, and even that she be made to do so.

"Wherefore, when the soul omits them through necessity, being unable through various circumstances to complete an action which she has begun, or, as may frequently happen, through obedience at the order of her director, it is well; since, if she continued then to do them, she not only would receive no merit, but would offend Me; thus thou seest that they are merely finite. She ought, therefore, to adopt them as a means, and not as an end. For, if she takes them as an end she will be obliged, some time or other, to leave them, and will then remain empty. This, My trumpeter, the glorious Paul, taught you when he said in his Epistle, that you should mortify the body and destroy self-will, knowing, that is to say, how to keep the rein on the body, macerating the flesh whenever it should wish to combat the spirit, but the will should be dead and annihilated in everything, and subject to My Will, and this slaying of the will is that due which, as I told thee, the virtue of discretion renders to the soul, that is to say, hatred and disgust of her own offenses and sensuality, which are acquired by self-knowledge. This is the knife which slays and cuts off all self-love founded in self-will. These then are they who give Me not only words but manifold works, and in these I take delight. And then I said that I desired few words, and many actions; by the use of the word 'many' I assign no particular number to thee, because the affection of the soul, founded in love, which gives life to all the virtues and good works, should increase infinitely, and yet I do not, by this, exclude words, I merely said that I wished few of them, showing thee that every actual operation, as such, was finite, and therefore I called them of little account; but they please Me when they are performed as the instruments of virtue, and not as a principal end in themselves.

"However, no one should judge that he has greater perfection, because he performs great penances, and gives himself in excess to the slaying of his body, than he who does less, inasmuch as neither virtue nor merit consists therein; for otherwise he would be in an evil case, who, from some legitimate reason, was unable to do actual penance. Merit consists in the virtue of love alone, flavored with the light of true discretion, without which the soul is worth nothing. And this love should be directed to Me endlessly, boundlessly, since I am the Supreme and Eternal Truth. The soul can therefore place neither laws nor limits to

her love for Me; but her love for her neighbor, on the contrary, is ordered in certain conditions. The light of discretion (which proceeds from love, as I have told thee) gives to the neighbor a conditioned love, one that, being ordered aright, does not cause the injury of sin to self in order to be useful to others, for, if one single sin were committed to save the whole world from Hell, or to obtain one great virtue, the motive would not be a rightly ordered or discreet love, but rather indiscreet, for it is not lawful to perform even one act of great virtue and profit to others, by means of the guilt of sin. Holy discretion ordains that the soul should direct all her powers to My service with a manly zeal, and, that she should love her neighbor with such devotion that she would lay down a thousand times, if it were possible, the life of her body for the salvation of souls, enduring pains and torments so that her neighbor may have the life of grace, and giving her temporal substance for the profit and relief of his body.

"This is the supreme office of discretion which proceeds from charity. So thou seest how discreetly every soul, who wishes for grace, should pay her debts, that is, should love Me with an infinite love and without measure, but her neighbor with measure, with a restricted love, as I have said, not doing herself the injury of sin in order to be useful to others. This is St. Paul's counsel to thee when he says that charity ought to be concerned first with self, otherwise it will never be of perfect utility to others. Because, when perfection is not in the soul, everything which the soul does for itself and for others is imperfect. It would not, therefore, be just that creatures, who are finite and created by Me, should be saved through offense done to Me, who am the Infinite Good. The more serious the fault is in such a case, the less fruit will the action produce; therefore, in no way shouldest thou ever incur the guilt of sin.

"And this true love knows well, because she carries with herself the light of holy discretion, that light which dissipates all darkness, takes away ignorance, and is the condiment of every instrument of virtue. Holy discretion is a prudence which cannot be cheated, a fortitude which cannot be beaten, a perseverance from end to end, stretching from Heaven to earth, that is, from knowledge of Me to knowledge of self, and from love of Me to love of others. And the soul escapes dangers by her true humility, and, by her prudence, flies all the nets of the world and its creatures, and, with unarmed hands, that is through much endurance, discomfits the devil and the flesh with this sweet and glorious light; knowing, by it, her own fragility, she renders to her weakness its due of hatred.

"Wherefore she has trampled on the world, and placed it under the feet of her affection, despising it, and holding it vile, and thus becoming lord of it, holding it as folly. And the men of the world cannot take her virtues from such a soul, but all their persecutions increase her virtues and prove them, which virtues have been at first conceived by the virtue of love, as has been said, and then are proved on her neighbor, and bring forth their fruit on him. Thus have I shown thee, that, if virtue were not visible and did not shine in the time of trial, it would not have been truly conceived; for, I have already told thee, that perfect virtue cannot exist and give fruit except by means of the neighbor, even as a woman, who has conceived a child, if she does not bring it forth, so that it may appear before the eyes of men, deprives her husband of his fame of paternity. It is the same with Me, who am the Spouse of the soul, if she do not produce the child of virtue, in the love of her neighbor, showing her child to him who is in need, both in general and in particular, as I have said to thee before, so I declare now that, in truth, she has not conceived virtue at all; and this is also true of the vices, all of which are committed by means of the neighbor."

How this soul grew by means of the divine response, and how her sorrows grew less, and how she prayed to God for the Holy Church, and for her own people.

THEN that soul, thirsting and burning with the very great desire that she had conceived on learning the ineffable love of God, shown in His great goodness, and, seeing the breadth of His charity, that, with such sweetness, He had deigned to reply to her request and to satisfy it, giving hope to the sorrow which she had conceived, on account of offenses against God, and the damage of the Holy Church, and through His own mercy, which she saw through self-knowledge, diminished, and yet, at the same time, increased her sorrow.

For, the Supreme and Eternal Father, in manifesting the way of perfection, showed her anew her own guilt, and the loss of souls, as has been said more fully above. Also because in the knowledge which the soul obtains of herself, she knows more of God, and knowing the goodness of God in herself, the sweet mirror of God, she knows her own dignity and indignity. Her dignity is that of her creation, seeing that she is the image of God, and this has been given her by grace, and not as her due. In that same mirror of the goodness of God, the soul knows her own indignity, which is the consequence of her own fault. Wherefore, as a man more readily sees spots on his face when he looks in a mirror, so, the soul who, with true knowledge of self, rises with desire, and gazes with the eye of the intellect at herself in the sweet mirror of God, knows better the stains of her own face, by the purity which she sees in Him.

Wherefore, because light and knowledge increased in that soul in the aforesaid way, a sweet sorrow grew in her, and at the same time, her sorrow was diminished by the hope which the Supreme Truth gave her, and, as fire grows when it is fed with wood, so grew the fire in that soul to such an extent that it was no longer possible for the body to endure it without the departure of the soul; so that, had she not been surrounded by the strength of Him who is the Supreme Strength, it would not have been possible for her to have lived any longer. This soul then, being purified by the fire of divine love, which she found in the knowledge of herself and of God, and her hunger for the salvation of the whole world, and for the reformation of the

Holy Church, having grown with her hope of obtaining the same, rose with confidence before the Supreme Father, showing Him the leprosy of the Holy Church, and the misery of the world, saying, as if with the words of Moses, "My Lord, turn the eyes of Thy mercy upon Thy people, and upon the mystical body of the Holy Church, for Thou wilt be the more glorified if Thou pardonest so many creatures, and givest to them the light of knowledge, since all will render Thee praise when they see themselves escape through Thy infinite goodness from the clouds of mortal sin, and from eternal damnation; and then Thou wilt not only be praised by my wretched self, who have so much offended Thee, and who am the cause and the instrument of all this evil, for which reason I pray Thy divine and eternal love to take Thy revenge on me, and to do mercy to Thy people, and never will I depart from before Thy presence until I see that Thou grantest them mercy. For what is it to me if I have life, and Thy people death, and the clouds of darkness cover Thy spouse, when it is my own sins, and not those of Thy other creatures, that are the principal cause of this? I desire, then, and beg of Thee, by Thy grace, that Thou have mercy on Thy people, and I adjure Thee that Thou do this by Thy uncreated love which moved Thee Thyselveto create man in Thy image and likeness, saying, 'Let us make man in our own image,' and this Thou didst, oh eternal Trinity, that man might participate in everything belonging to Thee, the most high and eternal Trinity.

"Wherefore Thou gavest him memory in order to receive Thy benefits, by which he participates in the power of the Eternal Father; and intellect that he might know, seeing Thy goodness, and so might participate in the wisdom of Thine Only-begotten Son; and will, that he might love that which his intellect has seen and known of Thy truth, thus participating in the clemency of Thy Holy Spirit. What reason hadst Thou for creating man in such dignity? The inestimable love with which Thou sawest Thy creature in Thyselveto become enamored of him, for Thou didst create him through love, and didst destine him to be such that he might taste and enjoy Thy Eternal Good. I see therefore that through his sin he lost this dignity in which Thou didst originally place him, and by his rebellion against Thee, fell into a state of war with Thy kindness, that is to say, we all became Thy enemies.

"Therefore, Thou, moved by that same fire of love with which Thou didst create him, didst willingly give man a means of reconciliation, so that after the great rebellion into which he had fallen, there should come a great peace; and so Thou didst give him the Only-begotten Word, Thy Son, to be the Mediator between us and Thee. He was our Justice, for He took on Himself all our offenses and injustices, and performed Thy obedience, Eternal Father, which Thou didst impose on Him, when Thou didst clothe Him with our humanity, our human nature and likeness. Oh, abyss of love! What heart can help breaking when it sees such dignity as Thine descend to such lowliness as our humanity? We are Thy image, and Thou hast become ours, by this union which Thou hast accomplished with man, veiling the eternal Deity with the cloud of woe, and the corrupted clay of Adam. For what reason?—Love. Wherefore, Thou, O God, hast become man, and man has become God. By this ineffable love of Thine, therefore, I constrain Thee, and implore Thee that Thou do mercy to Thy creatures."

How God grieves over the Christian people, and particularly over His ministers; and touches on the subject of the Sacrament of Christ's Body, and the benefit of the Incarnation.

THEN God, turning the eye of His mercy towards her, allowing Himself to be constrained by her tears, and bound by the chain of her holy desire, replied with lamentation—"My sweetest daughter, thy tears constrain Me, because they are joined with My love, and fall for love of Me, and thy painful desires force Me to answer thee; but marvel, and see how My spouse has defiled her face, and become leprous, on account of her filthiness and self-love, and swollen with the pride and avarice of those who feed on their own sin.

"What I say of the universal body and the mystical body of the Holy Church (that is to say the Christian religion) I also say of My ministers, who stand and feed at the breasts of Holy Church; and, not only should they feed themselves, but it is also their duty to feed and hold to those breasts the universal body of Christian people, and also any other people who should wish to leave the darkness of their infidelity, and bind themselves as members to My Church. See then with what ignorance and darkness, and ingratitude, are administered, and with what filthy hands are handled this glorious milk and blood of My spouse, and with what presumption and irreverence they are received. Wherefore, that which really gives life, often gives, through the defects of those who receive it, death; that is to say, the precious Blood of My Only-begotten Son, which destroyed death and darkness, and gave life and truth, and confounded falsehood. For I give this Blood and use It for salvation and perfection in the case of that man who disposes himself properly to receive It, for It gives life and adorns the soul with every grace, in proportion to the disposition and affection of him who receives It; similarly It gives death to him who receives It unworthily, living in iniquity and in the darkness of mortal sin; to him, I say, It gives death and not life; not through defect of the Blood, nor through defect of the minister, though there might be great evil in him, because his evil would not spoil nor defile the Blood nor diminish Its grace and virtue, nor does an evil minister do harm to him to whom he gives the Blood, but to himself he does the harm of guilt, which will be followed by punishment, unless he correct himself with contrition and repentance. I say then that the Blood does harm to him who receives It unworthily, not through defect of the Blood, nor of the minister, but through his own evil disposition and defect inasmuch as he has befouled his mind and body with such impurity and misery, and has been so cruel to himself and his neighbor. He has used cruelty to himself, depriving himself of grace, trampling under the feet of his

affection the fruit of the Blood which he had received in Holy Baptism, when the stain of original sin was taken from him by virtue of the Blood, which stain he drew from his origin, when he was generated by his father and mother.

"Wherefore I gave My Word, My Only-begotten Son, because the whole stuff of human generation was corrupted through the sin of the first man Adam. Wherefore, all of you, vessels made of this stuff, were corrupted and not disposed to the possession of eternal life—so I, with My dignity, joined Myself to the baseness of your human generation, in order to restore it to grace which you had lost by sin; for I was incapable of suffering, and yet, on account of guilt, My divine justice demanded suffering. But man was not sufficient to satisfy it, for, even if he had satisfied to a certain extent, he could only have satisfied for himself, and not for other rational creatures, besides which, neither for himself, nor for others, could man satisfy, his sin having been committed against Me, who am the Infinite Good. Wishing, however, to restore man, who was enfeebled, and could not satisfy for the above reason, I sent My Word, My own Son, clothed in your own very nature, the corrupted clay of Adam, in order that He might endure suffering in that self-same nature in which man had offended, suffering in His body even to the opprobrious death of the Cross, and so He satisfied My justice and My divine mercy. For My mercy willed to make satisfaction for the sin of man and to dispose him to that good for which I had created him. This human nature, joined with the Divine nature, was sufficient to satisfy for the whole human race, not only on account of the pain which it sustained in its finite nature, that is in the flesh of Adam, but by virtue of the eternal Deity, the Divine and infinite nature joined to it. The two natures being thus joined together, I received and accepted the sacrifice of My Only-begotten Son, kneaded into one dough with the Divine nature, by the fire of divine love which was the fetter which held Him fastened and nailed to the Cross in this way. Thus human nature was sufficient to satisfy for guilt, but only by virtue of the Divine nature. And in this way was destroyed the stain of Adam's sin, only the mark of it remaining behind, that is an inclination to sin, and to every sort of corporeal defect, like the cicatrice which remains when a man is healed of a wound. In this way the original fault of Adam was able still to cause a fatal stain; wherefore the coming of the great Physician, that is to say, of My Only-begotten Son, cured this invalid, He drinking this bitter medicine, which man could not drink on account of his great weakness, like a foster-mother who takes medicine instead of her suckling, because she is grown up and strong, and the child is not fit to endure its bitterness. He was man's foster-mother, enduring, with the greatness and strength of the Deity united with your nature, the bitter medicine of the painful death of the Cross, to give life to you little ones debilitated by guilt. I say therefore that the mark alone of original sin remains, which sin you take from your father and your mother when you were generated by them. But this mark is removed from the soul, though not altogether, by Holy Baptism, which has the virtue of communicating the life of grace by means of that glorious and precious Blood. Wherefore, at the moment that the soul receives Holy Baptism, original sin is taken away from her, and grace is infused into her, and that inclination to sin, which remains from the original corruption, as has been said, is indeed a source of weakness, but the soul can keep the bridle on it if she choose. Then the vessel of the soul is disposed to receive and increase in herself grace, more or less, according as it pleases her to dispose herself willingly with affection, and desire of loving and serving Me; and, in the same way, she can dispose herself to evil as to good, in spite of her having received grace in Holy Baptism. Wherefore when the time of discretion is come, the soul can, by her free will, make choice either of good or evil, according as it pleases her will; and so great is this liberty that man has, and so strong has this liberty been made by virtue of this glorious Blood, that no demon or creature can constrain him to one smallest fault without his free consent. He has been redeemed from slavery, and made free in order that he might govern his own sensuality, and obtain the end for which he was created. Oh, miserable man, who delights to remain in the mud like a brute, and does not learn this great benefit which he has received from Me! A benefit so great, that the poor wretched creature full of such ignorance could receive no greater."

How sin is more gravely punished after the Passion of Christ than before; and how God promises to do mercy to the world, and to the Holy Church, by means of the prayers and sufferings of His servants.

"**A**ND I wish thee to know, My daughter, that, although I have re-created and restored to the life of grace, the human race, through the Blood of My Only-begotten Son, as I have said, men are not grateful, but, going from bad to worse, and from guilt to guilt, even persecuting Me with many injuries, taking so little account of the graces which I have given them, and continue to give them, that, not only do they not attribute what they have received to grace, but seem to themselves on occasion to receive injuries from Me, as if I desired anything other than their sanctification.

"I say to thee that they will be more hard-hearted, and worthy of more punishment, and will, indeed, be punished more severely, now that they have received redemption in the Blood of My Son, than they would have been before that redemption took place—that is, before the stain of Adam's sin had been taken away. It is right that he who receives more should render more, and should be under great obligations to Him from whom he receives more.

"Man, then, was closely bound to Me through his being which I have given him, creating him in My own image and likeness; for which reason, he was bound to render Me glory, but he deprived Me of it, and wished to give it to himself. Thus he came to transgress My obedience imposed on him, and became My enemy. And I, with My humility, destroyed his pride, humiliating the divine nature, and taking your humanity, and, freeing you from the service of the devil, I made you free. And, not

only did I give you liberty, but, if you examine, you will see that man has become God, and God has become man, through the union of the Divine with the human nature. This is the debt which they have incurred—that is to say, the treasure of the Blood, by which they have been procreated to grace. See, therefore, how much more they owe after the redemption than before. For they are now obliged to render Me glory and praise by following in the steps of My Incarnate Word, My Only-begotten Son, for then they repay Me the debt of love both of Myself and of their neighbor, with true and genuine virtue, as I have said to thee above, and if they do not do it, the greater their debt, the greater will be the offense they fall into, and therefore, by divine justice, the greater their suffering in eternal damnation.

“A false Christian is punished more than a pagan, and the deathless fire of divine justice consumes him more, that is, afflicts him more, and, in his affliction, he feels himself being consumed by the worm of conscience, though, in truth, he is not consumed, because the damned do not lose their being through any torment which they receive. Wherefore I say to thee, that they ask for death and cannot have it, for they cannot lose their being; the existence of grace they lose, through their fault, but not their natural existence. Therefore guilt is more gravely punished after the Redemption of the Blood than before, because man received more; but sinners neither seem to perceive this, nor to pay any attention to their own sins, and so become My enemies, though I have reconciled them, by means of the Blood of My Son. But there is a remedy with which I appease My wrath—that is to say, by means of My servants, if they are jealous to constrain Me by their desire. Thou seest, therefore, that thou hast bound Me with this bond which I have given thee, because I wished to do mercy to the world.

“Therefore I give My servants hunger and desire for My honor, and the salvation of souls, so that, constrained by their tears, I may mitigate the fury of My divine justice. Take, therefore, thy tears and thy sweat, drawn from the fountain of My divine love, and, with them, wash the face of My spouse.

“I promise thee, that, by this means, her beauty will be restored to her, not by the knife nor by cruelty, but peacefully, by humble and continued prayer, by the sweat and the tears shed by the fiery desire of My servants, and thus will I fulfill thy desire if thou, on thy part, endure much, casting the light of thy patience into the darkness of perverse man, not fearing the world’s persecutions, for I will protect thee, and My Providence shall never fail thee in the slightest need.”

How the road to Heaven being broken through the disobedience of Adam, God made of His Son a Bridge by which man could pass.

“**W**HENCEFORE I have told thee that I have made a Bridge of My Word, of My Only-begotten Son, and this is the truth. I wish that you, My children, should know that the road was broken by the sin and disobedience of Adam, in such a way, that no one could arrive at Eternal Life. Wherefore men did not render Me glory in the way in which they ought to have, as they did not participate in that Good for which I had created them, and My truth was not fulfilled. This truth is that I have created man to My own image and likeness, in order that he might have Eternal Life, and might partake of Me, and taste My supreme and eternal sweetness and goodness. But, after sin had closed Heaven and bolted the doors of mercy, the soul of man produced thorns and prickly brambles, and My creature found in himself rebellion against himself.

“And the flesh immediately began to war against the Spirit, and, losing the state of innocence, became a foul animal, and all created things rebelled against man, whereas they would have been obedient to him, had he remained in the state in which I had placed him. He, not remaining therein, transgressed My obedience, and merited eternal death in soul and body. And, as soon as he had sinned, a tempestuous flood arose, which ever buffets him with its waves, bringing him weariness and trouble from himself, the devil, and the world. Every one was drowned in the flood, because no one, with his own justice alone, could arrive at Eternal Life. And so, wishing to remedy your great evils, I have given you the Bridge of My Son, in order that, passing across the flood, you may not be drowned, which flood is the tempestuous sea of this dark life. See, therefore, under what obligations the creature is to Me, and how ignorant he is, not to take the remedy which I have offered, but to be willing to drown.”

How God induces the soul to look at the greatness of this Bridge, inasmuch as it reaches from earth to Heaven.

“**O**PEN, my daughter, the eye of thy intellect, and thou wilt see the accepted and the ignorant, the imperfect, and also the perfect who follow Me in truth, so that thou mayest grieve over the damnation of the ignorant, and rejoice over the perfection of My beloved servants.

“Thou wilt see further how those bear themselves who walk in the light, and those who walk in the darkness. I also wish thee to look at the Bridge of My Only-begotten Son, and see the greatness thereof, for it reaches from Heaven to earth, that is, that the earth of your humanity is joined to the greatness of the Deity thereby. I say then that this Bridge reaches from Heaven to earth, and constitutes the union which I have made with man.

“This was necessary, in order to reform the road which was broken, as I said to thee, in order that man should pass through the bitterness of the world, and arrive at life; but the Bridge could not be made of earth sufficiently large to span the

flood and give you Eternal Life, because the earth of human nature was not sufficient to satisfy for guilt, to remove the stain of Adam's sin. Which stain corrupted the whole human race and gave out a stench, as I have said to thee above. It was, therefore, necessary to join human nature with the height of My nature, the Eternal Deity, so that it might be sufficient to satisfy for the whole human race, so that human nature should sustain the punishment, and that the Divine nature, united with the human, should make acceptable the sacrifice of My only Son, offered to Me to take death from you and to give you life.

"So the height of the Divinity, humbled to the earth, and joined with your humanity, made the Bridge and reformed the road. Why was this done? In order that man might come to his true happiness with the angels. And observe, that it is not enough, in order that you should have life, that My Son should have made you this Bridge, unless you walk thereon."

How this soul prays God to show her those who cross by the aforesaid Bridge, and those who do not.

THEN this soul exclaimed with ardent love—"Oh, inestimable Charity, sweet above all sweetness! Who would not be inflamed by such great love? What heart can help breaking at such tenderness? It seems, oh, Abyss of Charity, as if thou wert mad with love of Thy creature, as if Thou couldst not live without him, and yet Thou art our God who hast no need of us, Thy greatness does not increase through our good, for Thou art unchangeable, and our evil causes Thee no harm, for Thou art the Supreme and Eternal Goodness. What moves Thee to do us such mercy through pure love, and on account of no debt that Thou owedst us, or need that Thou hadst of us? We are rather Thy guilty and malignant debtors. Wherefore, if I understand aright, Oh, Supreme and Eternal Truth, I am the thief and Thou hast been punished for me. For I see Thy Word, Thy Son, fastened and nailed to the Cross, of which Thou hast made me a Bridge, as Thou hast shown me, Thy miserable servant, for which reason, my heart is bursting, and yet cannot burst, through the hunger and the desire which it has conceived towards Thee. I remember, my Lord, that Thou wast willing to show me who are those who go by the Bridge and those who do not; should it please Thy goodness to manifest this to me, willingly would I see and hear it."

How this Bridge has three steps, which signify the three states of the soul; and how, being lifted on high, yet it is not separated from the earth; and how these words are to be understood: "If I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all things unto Me."

THEN the Eternal God, to enamor and excite that soul still more for the salvation of souls, replied to her, and said: "First, as I have shown thee that for which thou didst wish, and ask Me, I will now explain to thee the nature of this Bridge. I have told thee, My daughter, that the Bridge reaches from Heaven to earth; this is through the union which I have made with man, whom I formed of the clay of the earth. Now learn that this Bridge, My Only-begotten Son, has three steps, of which two were made with the wood of the most Holy Cross, and the third still retains the great bitterness He tasted, when He was given gall and vinegar to drink. In these three steps you will recognize three states of the soul, which I will explain to thee below. The feet of the soul, signifying her affection, are the first step, for the feet carry the body as the affection carries the soul. Wherefore these pierced Feet are steps by which thou canst arrive at His Side, which manifests to thee the secret of His Heart, because the soul, rising on the steps of her affection, commences to taste the love of His Heart, gazing into that open Heart of My Son, with the eye of the intellect, and finds It consumed with ineffable love. I say consumed, because He does not love you for His own profit, because you can be of no profit to Him, He being one and the same substance with Me. Then the soul is filled with love, seeing herself so much loved. Having passed the second step, the soul reaches out to the third—that is—to the Mouth, where she finds peace from the terrible war she has been waging with her sin. On the first step, then, lifting her feet from the affections of the earth, the soul strips herself of vice; on the second she fills herself with love and virtue; and on the third she tastes peace. So the Bridge has three steps, in order that, climbing past the first and the second, you may reach the last, which is lifted on high, so that the water running beneath may not touch it; for, in My Son, was no venom of sin. This Bridge is lifted on high, and yet, at the same time, joined to the earth. Dost thou know when it was lifted on high? When My Son was lifted up on the wood of the most Holy Cross, the Divine nature remaining joined to the lowliness of the earth of your humanity.

"For this reason I said to thee that, being lifted on high, He was not lifted out of the earth, for the Divine nature is united and kneaded into one substance with it. And there was no one who could go on the Bridge until It had been lifted on high, wherefore He said—*'Si exaltatus fuero a terra omnia traham ad me ipsum,'* that is, '*If I am lifted up from the earth I will draw all things to Me.*' My Goodness, seeing that in no other way could you be drawn to Me, I sent Him in order that He should be lifted on high on the wood of the Cross, making of it an anvil on which My Son, born of human generation, should be remade, in order to free you from death, and to restore you to the life of grace; wherefore He drew everything to Himself by this means, namely, by showing the ineffable love, with which I love you, the heart of man being always attracted by love. Greater love, then, I could not show you, than to lay down My life for you; perforce, then, My Son was treated in this way by love, in order that ignorant man should be unable to resist being drawn to Me.

"In very truth, then, My Son said, that, being lifted on high, He would draw all things to Him. And this is to be understood in two ways. Firstly, that, when the heart of man is drawn by the affection of love, as I have said, it is drawn together with all the powers of his soul, that is, with the Memory, the Intellect, and the Will; now, when these three powers are harmoniously joined together in My Name, all the other operations which the man performs, whether in deed or thought, are pleasing, and joined together by the effect of love, because love is lifted on high, following the Sorrowful Crucified One; so My Truth said well, '*If I am lifted on high,*' etc., meaning, that if the heart and the powers of the soul are drawn to Him, all the actions are also drawn to Him. Secondly, everything has been created for the service of man, to serve the necessities of rational creatures, and the rational creature has not been made for them, but for Me, in order to serve Me with all his heart, and with all his affection. See, then, that man being drawn, everything else is drawn with him, because everything else has been made for him. It was therefore necessary that the Bridge should be lifted on high, and have steps, in order that it might be climbed with greater facility."

How this Bridge is built of stones which signify virtues; and how on the Bridge is a hostelry where food is given to the travellers; and how he who goes over the Bridge goes to life, while he who goes under It goes to perdition and death.

"**T**HIS Bridge is built of stones, so that, if the rain come, it may not impede the traveller. Dost thou know what these stones are? They are the stones of true and sincere virtues. These stones were not built into the walls before the Passion of My Son, and therefore even those who attempted to walk by the road of virtue were prevented from arriving at their journey's end, because Heaven was not yet unlocked with the key of the Blood, and the rain of Justice did not let them pass; but, after the stones were made, and built up on the Body of My sweet Son, My Word, of whom I have spoken to thee, He, who was Himself the Bridge, moistened the mortar for its building with His Blood. That is, His Blood was united with the mortar of divinity, and with the fortitude, and the fire of love; and, by My power, these stones of the virtues were built into a wall, upon Him as the foundation, for there is no virtue which has not been proved in Him, and from Him all virtues have their life. Wherefore no one can have the virtue given by a life of grace, but from Him, that is, without following the footsteps of His doctrine. He has built a wall of the virtues, planting them as living stones, and cementing them with His Blood, so that every believer may walk speedily, and without any servile fear of the rain of Divine justice, for he is sheltered by the mercy which descended from Heaven in the Incarnation of this My Son. How was Heaven opened? With the key of His Blood; so thou seest that the Bridge is walled and roofed with Mercy. His also is the Hostelry in the Garden of the Holy Church, which keeps and ministers the Bread of Life, and gives to drink of the Blood, so that My creatures, journeying on their pilgrimage, may not through weariness faint by the way; and for this reason My love has ordained that the Body and the Blood of My Only-begotten Son, wholly God and wholly man, may be ministered to you. The pilgrim, having passed the Bridge, arrives at the door which is part of the Bridge, at which all must enter, wherefore He says: '*I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life, he who follows Me does not walk in darkness, but in light.*' And in another place My Truth says, '*That no man can come to Me if not by Him,*' and so indeed it is. Therefore He says of Himself that He is the Road, and this is the truth, and I have already shown thee that He is a Road in the form of the Bridge. And He says that He is the Truth, and so He is, because He is united with Me who am the Truth, and he who follows Him, walks in the Truth, and in Life, because he who follows this Truth receives the life of grace, and cannot faint from hunger, because the Truth has become your food, nor fall in the darkness, because He is light without any falsehood. And, with that Truth, He confounded and destroyed the lie that the Devil told to Eve, with which he broke up the road to Heaven, and the Truth brought the pieces together again, and cemented them with His Blood. Wherefore, those who follow this road are the sons of the Truth, because they follow the Truth, and pass through the door of Truth and find themselves united to Me, who am the Door and the Road and at the same time Infinite Peace.

"But he, who walks not on this road, goes under the Bridge, in the river where there are no stones, only water, and since there are no supports in the water, no one can travel that way without drowning; thus have come to pass the sins, and the condition of the world. Wherefore, if the affection is not placed on the stones, but is placed, with disordinate love, on creatures, loving them, and being kept by them far from Me, the soul drowns, for creatures are like water that continually runs past, and man also passes continually like the river, although it seems to him that he stands still and the creatures that he loves pass by, and yet he is passing himself continually to the end of his journey—death! And he would fain retain himself (that is his life, and the things that he loves), but he does not succeed, either, through death, by which he has to leave them, or through My disposition, by which these created things are taken from the sight of My creatures. Such as these follow a lie, walking on the road of falsehood, and are sons of the devil, who is the father of lies; and, because they pass by the door of falsehood, they receive eternal damnation. So then thou seest, that I have shown thee both Truth and falsehood, that is, My road which is Truth, and the Devil's which is falsehood."

How travelling on both of these roads, that is the Bridge and the River, is fatiguing; and of the

delight which the soul feels in travelling by the Bridge.

“THESE are the two roads, and both are hard to travel. Wonder, then, at the ignorance and blindness of man, who, having a Road made for him, which causes such delight to those who use It, that every bitterness becomes sweet, and every burden light, yet prefers to walk over the water. For those who cross by the Bridge, being still in the darkness of the body, find light, and, being mortal, find immortal life, tasting, through love, the light of Eternal Truth which promises refreshment to him who wearies himself for Me, who am grateful and just, and render to every man according as he deserves. Wherefore every good deed is rewarded, and every fault is punished. The tongue would not be sufficient to relate the delight felt by him who goes on this road, for, even in this life, he tastes and participates in that good which has been prepared for him in eternal life. He, therefore, is a fool indeed, who despises so great a good, and chooses rather to receive in this life the earnest money of Hell, walking by the lower road with great toil and without any refreshment or advantage. Wherefore, through their sins, they are deprived of Me, who am the Supreme and Eternal Good. Truly then hast thou reason for grief, and I will that thou and My other servants remain in continual bitterness of soul at the offense done to Me, and in compassion for the ignorant, and the loss of those who, in their ignorance, thus offend Me. Now thou hast seen and heard about this Bridge, how it is, and this I have told thee in order to explain My words, that My Only-begotten Son was a Bridge. And thus, thou seest that He is the Truth, made in the way that I have shown thee, that is—by the union of height and lowness.”

How this Bridge, having reached to Heaven on the day of the Ascension, did not for that reason leave the earth.

“WHEN My Only-begotten Son returned to Me, forty days after the resurrection, this Bridge, namely Himself, arose from the earth, that is, from among the conversation of men, and ascended into Heaven by virtue of the Divine Nature and sat at the right hand of Me, the Eternal Father, as the angels said, on the day of the Ascension, to the disciples, standing like dead men, their hearts lifted on high, and ascended into Heaven with the wisdom of My Son—*‘Do not stand here any longer, for He is seated at the right hand of the Father!’* When He, then, had thus ascended on high, and returned to Me the Father, I sent the Master, that is the Holy Spirit, who came to you with My power and the wisdom of My Son, and with His own clemency, which is the essence of the Holy Spirit. He is one substance with Me, the Father, and with My Son. And He built up the road of the doctrine which My Truth had left in the world. Thus, though the bodily presence of My Son left you, His doctrine remained, and the virtue of the stones founded upon this doctrine, which is the way made for you by this Bridge. For first, He practiced this doctrine and made the road by His actions, giving you His doctrine by example rather than by words; for He practiced first Himself what He afterwards taught you, then the clemency of the Holy Spirit made you certain of the doctrine, fortifying the minds of the disciples to confess the truth, and to announce this road, that is, the doctrine of Christ crucified, reproving, by this means, the world of its injustice and false judgment, of which injustice and false judgment, I will in time discourse to you at greater length.

“This much I have said to thee in order that there might be no cloud of darkness in the mind of your hearers, that is, that they may know that of this Body of Christ I made a Bridge by the union of the Divine with the human nature, for this is the truth.

“This Bridge, taking its point of departure in you, rose into Heaven, and was the one road which was taught you by the example and life of the Truth. What has now remained of all this, and where is the road to be found? I will tell thee, that is, I will rather tell those who might fall into ignorance on this point. I tell thee that this way of His doctrine, of which I have spoken to thee, confirmed by the Apostles, declared by the blood of the Martyrs, illuminated by the light of the Doctors, confessed by the Confessors, narrated in all its love by the Evangelists, all of whom stand as witnesses to confess the Truth, is found in the mystical body of the Holy Church. These witnesses are like the light placed on a candlestick, to show forth the way of the Truth which leads to life with a perfect light, as I have said to thee, and, as they themselves say to thee, with proof, since they have proved in their own cases, that every person may, if he will, be illuminated to know the Truth, unless he choose to deprive his reason of light by his inordinate self-love. It is, indeed, the truth that His doctrine is true, and has remained like a lifeboat to draw the soul out of the tempestuous sea and to conduct her to the port of salvation.

“Wherefore, first I gave you the Bridge of My Son living and conversing in very deed amongst men, and when He, the living Bridge, left you, there remained the Bridge and the road of His doctrine, as has been said, His doctrine being joined with My power and with His wisdom, and with the clemency of the Holy Spirit. This power of Mine gives the virtue of fortitude to whoever follows this road, wisdom gives him light, so that, in this road, he may recognize the truth, and the Holy Spirit gives him love, which consumes and takes away all sensitive love out of the soul, leaving there only the love of virtue. Thus, in both ways, both actually and through His doctrine, He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life; that is, the Bridge which leads you to the height of Heaven. This is what He meant when He said, ‘*I came from the Father, and I return to the Father, and shall return to you;*’ that is to say, ‘My Father sent Me to you, and made Me your Bridge, so that you might be saved from the river and attain to life.’ Then He says, ‘*I will return to you, I will not leave you orphans, but will send you the Paraclete*’—as if My Truth should say, ‘I will go to the Father and return; that is, that when the Holy Spirit shall come, who is called the Paraclete,

He will show you more clearly, and will confirm you in the way of truth, that I have given you.' He said that He would return, and He did return, because the Holy Spirit came not alone, but with the power of the Father, and the wisdom of the Son, and the clemency of His own Essence.

"See then how He returns, not in actual flesh and blood, but, as I have said, building the road of His doctrine, with His power, which road cannot be destroyed or taken away from him who wishes to follow it, because it is firm and stable, and proceeds from Me, who am immovable.

"Manfully, then, should you follow this road, without any cloud of doubt, but with the light of faith which has been given you as a principle in Holy Baptism.

"Now I have fully shown to you the Bridge as it actually is, and the doctrine, which is one and the same thing with it. And I have shown it to the ignorant, in order that they may see where this road of Truth is, and where stand those who teach it; and I have explained that they are the Apostles, Martyrs, Confessors, Evangelists, and Holy Doctors, placed like lanterns in the Holy Church.

"And I have shown how My Son, returning to Me, nonetheless, returned to you, not in His bodily presence, but by His power, when the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples, as I have said. For in His bodily presence He will not return until the last Day of Judgment, when He will come again with My Majesty and Divine Power to judge the world, to render good to the virtuous, and reward them for their labors, both in body and soul, and to dispense the evil of eternal death to those who have lived wickedly in the world.

"And now I wish to tell thee that which I, the Truth, promised thee, that is, to show thee the perfect, the imperfect, and the supremely perfect; and the wicked, who, through their iniquities, drown in the river, attaining to punishment and torment; wherefore I say to you, My dearest sons, walk over the Bridge, and not underneath it, because underneath is not the way of truth, but the way of falsehood, by which walk the wicked, of whom I will presently speak to you. These are those sinners for whom I beg you to pray to Me, and for whom I ask in addition your tears and sweat, in order that they may receive mercy from Me."

How this soul wondering at the mercy of God, relates many gifts and graces given to the human race.

THEN this soul, as it were, like one intoxicated, could not contain herself, but standing before the face of God, exclaimed, "How great is the eternal Mercy with which Thou coverest the sins of Thy creatures! I do not wonder that Thou sayest of those who abandon mortal sin and return to Thee, '*I do not remember that you have ever offended Me.*' Oh, ineffable mercy! I do not wonder that Thou sayest this to those who are converted, when Thou sayest of those who persecute Thee, 'I wish you to pray for such, in order that I may do them mercy.' Oh, Mercy, who proceedest from Thy Eternal Father, the Divinity who governest with Thy power the whole world, by Thee were we created, in Thee were we re-created in the Blood of Thy Son. Thy mercy preserves us, Thy mercy caused Thy Son to do battle for us, hanging by His arms on the wood of the Cross, life and death battling together; then life confounded the death of our sin, and the death of our sin destroyed the bodily life of the Immaculate Lamb. Which was finally conquered? Death! By what means? Mercy! Thy mercy gives light and life, by which Thy clemency is known in all Thy creatures, both the just and the unjust. In the height of Heaven Thy mercy shines, that is, in Thy saints. If I turn to the earth, it abounds with Thy mercy. In the darkness of Hell Thy mercy shines, for the damned do not receive the pains they deserve; with Thy mercy Thou temperest Justice. By mercy Thou hast washed us in the Blood, and by mercy Thou wishest to converse with Thy creatures. Oh, Loving Madman! was it not enough for Thee to become Incarnate, that Thou must also die? Was not death enough, that Thou must also descend into Limbo, taking thence the holy Fathers to fulfill Thy mercy and Thy truth in them? Because Thy goodness promises a reward to them that serve Thee in truth, didst Thou descend to Limbo, to withdraw from their pain Thy servants, and give them the fruit of their labors. Thy mercy constrains Thee to give even more to man, namely, to leave Thyself to him in food [Communion], so that we, weak ones, should have comfort, and the ignorant commemorating Thee, should not lose the memory of Thy benefits. Wherefore every day Thou givest Thyself to man, representing Thyself in the Sacrament of the Altar, in the body of Thy Holy Church. What has done this? Thy mercy. Oh, Divine mercy! My heart suffocates in thinking of Thee, for on every side to which I turn my thought, I find nothing but mercy. Oh, Eternal Father! Forgive my ignorance, that I presume thus to chatter to Thee, but the love of Thy mercy will be my excuse before the face of Thy loving-kindness."

Of the baseness of those who pass by the river under the Bridge; and how the soul, that passes underneath, is called by God the tree of death, whose roots are held in four vices.

AFTER this soul had refreshed a little her heart in the mercy of God, by these words, she humbly waited for the fulfillment of the promise made to her, and God continuing His discourse said: "Dearest daughter, thou hast spoken before Me of My mercy, because I gave it thee to taste and to see in the word which I spoke to thee when I said: 'these are those for whom I pray

you to intercede with Me,' but know, that My mercy is without any comparison, far more than thou canst see, because thy sight is imperfect, and My mercy perfect and infinite, so that there can be no comparison between the two, except what may be between a finite and an infinite thing. But I have wished that thou shouldest taste this mercy, and also the dignity of man, which I have shown thee above, so that thou mightest know better the cruelty of those wicked men who travel below the Bridge. Open the eye of thy intellect, and wonder at those who voluntarily drown themselves, and at the baseness to which they are fallen by their fault, from which cause, they have first become weak, and this was when they conceived mortal sin in their minds, for they then bring it forth, and lose the life of grace. And, as a corpse which can have no feeling or movement of itself, but only when it is moved and lifted by others, so those, who are drowned in the stream of disordinate love of the world, are dead to grace. Wherefore because they are dead their memory takes no heed of My mercy. The eye of their intellect sees not and knows not My truth, because their feeling is dead, that is, their intellect has no object before it but themselves, with the dead love of their own sensuality, and so their will is dead to My Will because it loves nothing but dead things. These three powers then being dead, all the soul's operations both in deed and thought are dead as far as grace is concerned. For the soul cannot defend herself against her enemies, nor help herself through her own power, but only so far as she is helped by Me. It is true indeed, that every time that this corpse, in whom only free-will has remained (which remains as long as the mortal body lives), asks My help, he can have it, but never can he help himself; he has become insupportable to himself, and, wishing to govern the world, is governed by that which is not, that is by sin, for sin in itself is nothing, and such men have become the servants and slaves of sin. I have made them trees of love with the life of grace which they received in Holy Baptism; and they have become trees of death, because they are dead, as I have already said to thee. Dost thou know how this tree finds such roots? In the height of pride, which is nourished by their own sensitive self-love. Its branch is their own impatience, and its off-shoot indiscretion: these are the four principal vices which destroy the soul of him who is a tree of death, because he has not drawn life from grace. Inside the tree is nourished the worm of conscience, which, while man lives in mortal sin, is blinded by self-love, and therefore felt but little; the fruits of this tree are mortal, for they have drawn their nourishment, which should have been humility, from the roots of pride, and the miserable soul is full of ingratitude, whence proceeds every evil. But if she were grateful for the benefits she has received, she would know Me, and knowing Me would know herself, and so would remain in My love: but she, as if blind, goes groping down the river, and she does not see that the water does not support her."

How the fruits of this tree are as diverse as are the sins; and first, of the sin of sensuality.

“THE fruits of this death-giving tree, are as diverse as sins are diverse. See that some of these fruits are the food of beasts who live impurely, using their body and their mind like a swine who wallows in mud, for in the same way they wallow in the mire of sensuality. Oh, ugly soul, where hast thou left thy dignity? Thou wast made sister to the angels, and now thou art become a brute beast. To such misery come sinners, notwithstanding that they are sustained by Me, who am supreme Purity, notwithstanding that the very devils, whose friends and servants they have become, cannot endure the sight of such filthy actions. Neither does any sin, abominable as it may be, take away the light of the intellect from man, so much as does this one. This the philosophers knew, not by the light of grace, because they had it not, but because nature gave them the light to know that this sin obscured the intellect, and for that reason they preserved themselves in continence the better to study. Thus also they flung away their riches in order that the thought of them should not occupy their heart. Not so does the ignorant and false Christian, who has lost grace by sin.”

How the fruit of others is avarice; and of the evils that proceed from it.

“A FRUIT of the earth belongs to some others, who are covetous misers, acting like the mole, who always feeds on earth till death, and when they arrive at death they find no remedy. Such as these, with their meanness, despise My generosity, selling time to their neighbor. They are cruel usurers, and robbers of their neighbor; because in their memory they have not the remembrance of My mercy, for if they had it they would not be cruel to themselves or to their neighbor; on the contrary, they would be compassionate and merciful to themselves, practicing the virtues on their neighbor and succoring him charitably. Oh, how many are the evils that come of this cursed sin of avarice, how many homicides and thefts, and how much pillage with unlawful gain, and cruelty of heart and injustice! It kills the soul and makes her the slave of riches, so that she cares not to observe My Commandments.

“A miser loves no one except for his own profit. Avarice proceeds from and feeds pride, the one follows from the other, because the miser always carries with him the thought of his own reputation, and thus avarice, which is immediately combined with pride, full of its own opinions, goes on from bad to worse. It is a fire which always germinates the smoke of vainglory and vanity of heart, and boasting in that which does not belong to it. It is a root which has many branches, and the principal one is that which makes a man care for his own reputation, from whence proceeds his desire to be greater than his neighbor. It also brings forth the deceitful heart that is neither pure nor liberal, but is double, making a man show one thing with his tongue, while he has another in his heart, and making him conceal the truth and tell lies for his own profit. And it produces envy, which

is a worm that is always gnawing, and does not let the miser have any happiness out of his own or others' good. How will these wicked ones in so wretched a state give of their substance to the poor, when they rob others? How will they draw their foul soul out of the mire, when they themselves put it there? Sometimes even do they become so brutish, that they do not consider their children and relations, and cause them to fall with them into great misery. And, nevertheless, in My mercy I sustain them, I do not command the earth to swallow them up, that they may repent of their sins. Would they then give their life for the salvation of souls, when they will not give their substance? Would they give their affections when they are gnawed with envy? Oh, miserable vices that destroy the heaven of the soul. Heaven I call her (the soul) because so I made her, living in her at first by grace, and hiding Myself within her, and making of her a mansion through affection of love. Now she has separated herself from Me, like an adulteress, loving herself and creatures more than Me, and has made a god of herself, persecuting Me with many and diverse sins. And this she does because she does not consider the benefit of the Blood that was shed with so great fire of love."

How some others hold positions of authority, and bring forth fruits of injustice.

“**T**HREE are others who hold their heads high by their position of authority, and who bear the banner of injustice—using injustice against Me, God, and against their neighbor, and against themselves—to themselves by not paying the debt of virtue, and towards Me by not paying the debt of honor in glorifying and praising My Name, which debt they are bound to pay. But they, like thieves, steal what is Mine, and give it to the service of their own sensuality. So that they commit injustice towards Me and towards themselves, like blind and ignorant men who do not recognize Me in themselves on account of self-love, like the Jews and the ministers of the Law who, with envy and self-love, blinded themselves so that they did not recognize the Truth, My Only-begotten Son, and rendered not His due to the Eternal Truth, who was amongst them, as said My Truth: ‘*The Kingdom of God is among you.*’ But they knew it not, because, in the aforesaid way, they had lost the light of reason, and so they did not pay their debt of honor and glory to Me, and to Him, who was one thing with Me, and like blind ones committed injustice, persecuting Him with much ignominy, even to the death of the Cross.

“Thus are such as these unjust to themselves, to Me, and to their neighbor, unjustly selling the flesh of their dependents, and of any person who falls into their hands.”

How through these and through other defects, one falls into false judgment; and of the indignity to which one comes.

“**B**Y these and by other sins men fall into false judgment, as I will explain to you below. They are continually being scandalized by My works, which are all just, and all performed in truth through love and mercy. With this false judgment, and with the poison of envy and pride, the works of My Son were slandered and unjustly judged, and with lies did His enemies say: ‘*This man works by virtue of Beelzebub.*’ Thus wicked men, standing in self-love, impurity, pride, and avarice, and founded in envy, and in perverse rashness with impatience, are forever scandalized at Me and at My servants, whom they judge to be feignedly practicing the virtues, because their heart is rotten, and, having spoilt their taste, good things seem evil to them, and bad things, that is to say disorderly living, seem good to them. Oh, how blind is the human generation in that it considers not its own dignity! From being great thou hast become small, from a ruler thou hast become a slave, and that in the vilest service that can be had, because thou art the servant and slave of sin, and art become like unto that which thou dost serve.

“Sin is nothing. Thou, then, hast become nothing; it has deprived thee of life, and given thee death. This life and power were given you by the Word, My Only-begotten Son, the glorious Bridge, He drawing you from out of your servitude when you were servants of the devil, Himself becoming as a servant to take you out of servitude, imposing on Himself obedience to do away the disobedience of Adam, and humbling Himself to the shameful death of the Cross to confound pride. By His death He destroyed every vice, so that no one could say that any vice remained that was not punished and beaten out with pains, as I said to thee above, when I said that of His body He had made an anvil. All the remedies are ready to save men from eternal death, and they despise the Blood, and have trampled It under the feet of their disordinate affection; and it is for this injustice and false judgment that the world is reproved, and will be reproved on the Last Day of Judgment.

“This was meant by My Truth when He said: ‘*I will send the Paraclete, who will reprove the world for injustice and false judgment.*’ And it was reproved when I sent the Holy Spirit on the Apostles.”

Of the words that Christ said: “I will send the Holy Spirit, who will reprove the world of injustice and of false judgment;” and how one of these reproofs is continuous.

“**T**HREE are three reproofs, One was given when the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples, who, as it is said, being fortified by My power, and illuminated by the wisdom of My beloved Son, received all in the plenitude of the Holy Spirit. Then the Holy Spirit, who is one substance with Me and with My Son, reproved the world by the mouth of the Apostles, with the

doctrine of My Truth. They and all others, who are descended from them, following the truth which they understand through the same means, reprove the world.

"This is that continuous reproof that I make to the world by means of the Holy Scriptures, and My servants, putting the Holy Spirit on their tongues to announce My truth, even as the devil puts himself on the tongues of his servants, that is to say, of those who pass through the river in iniquity. This is that sweet reproof that I have fixed forever, in the aforesaid way, out of My most great affection of love for the salvation of souls. And they cannot say 'I had no one who reproved me,' because the truth is revealed to them showing them vice and virtue. And I have made them see the fruit of virtue, and the hurtfulness of vice, to give them love and holy fear with hatred of vice and love of virtue, and this truth has not been shown them by an angel, so that they cannot say, 'the angel is a blessed spirit who cannot offend, and feels not the vexations of the flesh as we do, neither the heaviness of our body,' because the Incarnate Word of My Truth has been given to them with your mortal flesh.

"Who were the others who followed this Word? Mortal creatures, susceptible of pain like you, having the same opposition of the flesh to the Spirit, as had the glorious Paul, My standard-bearer, and many other saints who, by one thing or another, have been tormented. Which torments I permitted for the increase of grace and virtue in their souls. Thus, they were born in sin like you, and nourished with a like food, and I am God now as then. My power is not weakened, and cannot become weak. So that I can and will succor him who wishes to be succored by Me. Man wants My succor when he comes out of the river, and walks by the Bridge, following the doctrine of My Truth. Thus no one has any excuse, because both reproof and truth are constantly given to them. Wherefore, if they do not amend while they have time, they will be condemned by the second condemnation which will take place at the extremity of death, when My justice will cry to them, 'Rise, ye dead, and come to judgment!' That is to say, 'Thou, who art dead to grace, and hast reached the moment of thy corporal death, arise and come before the Supreme Judge with thy injustice and false judgment, and with the extinguished light of faith which thou didst receive burning in Holy Baptism (and which thou hast blown out with the wind of pride), and with the vanity of thy heart, with which thou didst set thy sails to winds which were contrary to thy salvation, for with the wind of self-esteem, didst thou fill the sail of self-love.' Thus didst thou hasten down the stream of the delights and dignities of the world at thy own will, following thy fragile flesh and the temptations of the devil, who, with the sail of thy own will set, has led thee along the underway which is a running stream, and so has brought thee with himself to eternal damnation."

Of the second reproof of injustice, and of false judgment, in general and in particular.

"**T**HIS second reproof, dearest daughter, is indeed a condemnation, for the soul has arrived at the end, where there can be no remedy, for she is at the extremity of death, where is the worm of conscience, which I told thee was blinded self-love. Now at the time of death, since she cannot get out of My hands, she begins to see, and therefore is gnawed with remorse, seeing that her own sin has brought her into so great evil. But if the soul have light to know and grieve for her fault, not on account of the pain of Hell that follows upon it, but on account of pain at her offense against Me, who am Supreme and Eternal Good, still she can find mercy. But if she pass the Bridge of death without light, and alone, with the worm of conscience, without the hope of the Blood, and bewailing herself more on account of her first condemnation than on account of My displeasure, she arrives at eternal damnation. And then she is reproved cruelly by My Justice of injustice and of false judgment, and not so much of general injustice and false judgment which she has practiced generally in all her works, but much more on account of the particular injustice and false judgment which she practices at the end, in judging her misery greater than My mercy. This is that sin which is neither pardoned here nor there, because the soul would not be pardoned, depreciating My mercy. Therefore is this last sin graver to Me than all the other sins that the soul has committed. Wherefore the despair of Judas displeased Me more, and was more grave to My Son than was his betrayal of Him. So that they are reproved of this false judgment, which is to have held their sin to be greater than My mercy, and, on that account, are they punished with the devils, and eternally tortured with them. And they are reproved of injustice because they grieve more over their condemnation than over My displeasure, and do not render to Me that which is Mine, and to themselves that which is theirs. For to Me, they ought to render love, and to themselves bitterness, with contrition of heart, and offer it to Me, for the offense they have done Me. And they do the contrary because they give to themselves love, pitying themselves, and grieving on account of the pain they expect for their sin; so thou seest that they are guilty of injustice and false judgment, and are punished for the one and the other together. Wherefore, they, having depreciated My mercy, I with justice send them, with their cruel servant, sensuality, and the cruel tyrant the devil, whose servants they made themselves through their own sensuality, so that, together, they are punished and tormented, as together they have offended Me. Tormented, I say, by My ministering devils whom My judgment has appointed to torment those who have done evil."

Of the four principal torments of the damned, from which follow all the others; and particularly of the foulness of the Devil.

“**M**Y daughter, the tongue is not sufficient to narrate the pain of these poor souls. As there are three principal vices, namely: self-love, whence proceeds the second, that is love of reputation, whence proceeds the third, that is pride, with injustice and cruelty, and with other filthiness and iniquitous sins, that follow upon these. So I say to thee, that in Hell, the souls have four principal torments, out of which proceed all the other torments. The first is, that they see themselves deprived of the vision of Me, which is such pain to them, that, were it possible, they would rather choose the fire, and the tortures and torments, and to see Me, than to be without the torments and not to see Me.

“This first pain revives in them, then, the second, the worm of Conscience, which gnaws unceasingly, seeing that the soul is deprived of Me, and of the conversation of the angels, through her sin, made worthy of the conversation and sight of the devils, which vision of the devil is the third pain and redoubles to them their every toil. As the saints exult in the sight of Me, refreshing themselves with joyousness in the fruit of their toils borne for Me with such abundance of love, and displeasure of themselves, so does the sight of the devil revive these wretched ones to torments, because in seeing him they know themselves more, that is to say, they know that, by their own sin, they have made themselves worthy of him. And so the worm of Conscience gnaws more and more, and the fire of this Conscience never ceases to burn. And the sight is more painful to them, because they see him in his own form, which is so horrible that the heart of man could not imagine it. And if thou remember well, thou knowest that I showed him to thee in his own form for a little space of time, hardly a moment, and thou didst choose (after thou hadst returned to thyself) rather to walk on a road of fire, even until the Day of Judgment, than to see him again. With all this that thou hast seen, even thou dost not know well how horrible he is, because, by Divine justice, he appears more horrible to the soul that is deprived of Me, and more or less according to the gravity of her sin. The fourth torment that they have is the fire. This fire burns and does not consume, for the being of the soul cannot be consumed, because it is not a material thing that fire can consume. But I, by Divine justice, have permitted the fire to burn them with torments, so that it torments them, without consuming them, with the greatest pains in diverse ways according to the diversity of their sins, to some more, and to some less, according to the gravity of their fault. Out of these four torments issue all others, such as cold and heat and gnashing of the teeth and many others. Now because they did not amend themselves after the first reproof that they had of injustice and false judgment, neither in the second, which was that, in death, they would not hope in Me, nor grieve for the offense done to Me, but only for their own pain, have they thus so miserably received eternal punishment.”

Of the third reproof which is made on the Day of Judgment.

“**N**OW it remains to tell of the third reproof which is on the Last Day of Judgment. Already I have told thee of two, and now, so that thou mayest see how greatly man deceives himself, I will tell thee of the third—of the General Judgment, when the pain of the miserable soul is renewed and increased by the union that the soul will make with the body, with an intolerable reproof, which will generate in it confusion and shame. Know that, in the Last Day of Judgment, when will come the Word—My Son, with My Divine Majesty to reprove the world with Divine power, He will not come like a poor one, as when He was born, coming in the womb of the Virgin, and being born in a stable amongst the animals, and then dying between two thieves. Then I concealed My power in Him, letting Him suffer pain and torment like man, not that My Divine nature was therefore separated from human nature, but I let Him suffer like man to satisfy for your guilt. He will not come thus in that last moment, but He will come, with power, to reprove in His own Person, and will render to every one his due, and there will be no one in that Day who will not tremble. To the miserable ones who are damned, His aspect will cause such torment and terror that the tongue cannot describe it. To the just it will cause the fear of reverence with great joy; not that His face changes, because He is unchangeable, being one substance with Me according to the Divine nature, and, according to the human nature, His face was unchangeable, after it took the glory of the Resurrection. But, to the eye of the damned, it will appear such, on account of their terrible and darkened vision, that, as the sun which is so bright, appears all darkness to the infirm eye, but to the healthy eye light (and it is not the defect of the light that makes it appear other to the blind than to the illuminated one, but the defect of the eye which is infirm), so will the condemned ones see His countenance in darkness, in confusion, and in hatred, not through defect of My Divine Majesty, with which He will come to judge the world, but through their own defect.”

How the damned cannot desire any good.

“**A**ND their hatred is so great that they cannot will or desire any good, but they continually blaspheme Me. And dost thou know why they cannot desire good? Because the life of man ended, free-will is bound. Wherefore they cannot merit, having lost, as they have, the time to do so. If they finish their life, dying in hatred with the guilt of mortal sin, their souls, by divine justice, remain forever bound with the bonds of hatred, and forever obstinate in that evil, in which, therefore, being gnawed by themselves, their pains always increase, especially the pains of those who have been the cause of damnation to others, as that rich man, who was damned, demonstrated to you when he begged the favor that Lazarus might go to his brothers, who were in the world, to tell them of his pains. This, certainly, he did not do out of love or compassion for his brothers, for he

was deprived of love and could not desire good, either for My honor or their salvation, because, as I have already told thee, the damned souls cannot do any good to their neighbor, and they blaspheme Me, because their life ended in hatred of Me and of virtue. But why then did he do it? He did it because he was the eldest, and had nourished them up in the same miseries in which he had lived, so that he was the cause of their damnation, and he saw pain increased to himself, on account of their damnation when they should arrive in torment together with him, to be gnawed forever by hatred, because in hatred they finished their lives."

Of the glory of the Blessed.

“**S**IMILARLY, the just soul, for whom life finishes in the affection of charity and the bonds of love, cannot increase in virtue, time having come to nought, but she can always love with that affection with which she comes to Me, and that measure that is measured to her. She always desires Me, and loves Me, and her desire is not in vain—being hungry, she is satisfied, and being satisfied, she has hunger, but the tediousness of satiety and the pain of hunger are far from her. In love, the Blessed rejoice in My eternal vision, participating in that good that I have in Myself, every one according to his measure, that is that, with that measure of love, with which they have come to Me, is it measured to them. Because they have lived in love of Me and of the neighbor, united together with the general love, and the particular, which, moreover, both proceed from the same love. And they rejoice and exult, participating in each other’s good with the affection of love, besides the universal good that they enjoy altogether. And they rejoice and exult with the angels with whom they are placed, according to their diverse and various virtues in the world, being all bound in the bonds of love. And they have a special participation with those whom they closely loved with particular affection in the world, with which affection they grew in grace, increasing virtue, and the one was the occasion to the other of manifesting the glory and praise of My Name, in themselves and in their neighbor; and, in the life everlasting, they have not lost their love, but have it still, participating closely, with more abundance, the one with the other, their love being added to the universal good, and I would not that thou shouldest think that they have this particular good, of which I have told thee, for themselves alone, for it is not so, but it is shared by all the proved citizens, My beloved sons, and all the angels—for, when the soul arrives at eternal life, all participate in the good of that soul, and the soul in their good. Not that her vessel or theirs can increase, nor that there be need to fill it, because it is full, but they have an exultation, a mirthfulness, a jubilee, a joyousness in themselves, which is refreshed by the knowledge that they have found in that soul. They see that, by My mercy, she is raised from the earth with the plenitude of grace, and therefore they exult in Me in the good of that soul, which good she has received through My goodness.

“And that soul rejoices in Me, and in the souls, and in the blessed spirits, seeing and tasting in them the beauty and the sweetness of My love. And their desires forever cry out to Me, for the salvation of the whole world. And because their life ended in the love of the neighbor, they have not left it behind, but with it they will pass through the Door, My Only-begotten Son in the way that I will relate to thee. So thou seest that in those bonds of love in which they finished their life, they go on and remain eternally. They are conformed so entirely to My Will, that they cannot desire except what I desire, because their free-will is bound in the bond of love, in such a way that, time failing them, and, dying in a state of grace, they cannot sin any more. And their will is so united with Mine, that a father or a mother seeing their son, or a son seeing his father or his mother in Hell, do not trouble themselves, and even are contented to see them punished as My enemies. Wherefore in nothing do they disagree with Me, and their desires are all satisfied. The desire of the Blessed is to see My honor in you wayfarers, who are pilgrims, forever running on towards the term of death. In their desire for My honor, they desire your salvation, and always pray to Me for you, which desire is fulfilled by Me, when you ignorant ones do not resist My mercy. They have a desire too, to regain the gifts of their body, but this desire does not afflict them, as they do not actually feel it, but they rejoice in tasting the desire, from the certainty they feel of having it fulfilled. Their desire does not afflict them, because, though they have it not yet fulfilled, no bliss is thereby lacking to them. Wherefore they feel not the pain of desire. And think not, that the bliss of the body after the resurrection gives more bliss to the soul, for, if this were so, it would follow that, until they had the body, they had imperfect bliss, which cannot be, because no perfection is lacking to them. So it is not the body that gives bliss to the soul, but the soul will give bliss to the body, because the soul will give of her abundance, and will re-clothe herself on the Last Day of Judgment, in the garments of her own flesh which she had quitted. For, as the soul is made immortal, stayed and established in Me, so the body in that union becomes immortal, and, having lost heaviness, is made fine and light. Wherefore, know that the glorified body can pass through a wall, and that neither water nor fire can injure it, not by virtue of itself, but by virtue of the soul, which virtue is of Me, given to her by grace, and by the ineffable love with which I created her in My image and likeness. The eye of thy intellect is not sufficient to see, nor thy ear to hear, nor thy tongue to tell of the good of the Blessed. Oh, how much delight they have in seeing Me, who am every good! Oh, how much delight they will have in being with the glorified body, though, not having that delight from now to the general Judgment, they have not, on that account, pain, because no bliss is lacking to them, the soul being satisfied in herself, and, as I have told thee, the body will participate in this bliss.

“I told thee of the happiness which the glorified body would take in the glorified humanity of My Only-begotten Son, which gives you assurance of your resurrection. There, they exult in His wounds, which have remained fresh, and the scars in

His Body are preserved, and continually cry for mercy for you, to Me, the Supreme and Eternal Father. And they are all conformed with Him, in joyousness and mirth, and you will all be conformed with Him, eye with eye, and hand with hand, and with the whole Body of the sweet Word, My Son, and, dwelling in Me, you will dwell in Him, because He is one substance with Me. But their bodily eye, as I told thee, will delight itself in the glorified humanity of the Word, My Only-begotten Son. Why so? Because their life finished in the affection of My love, and therefore will this delight endure for them eternally. Not that they can work any good, but they rejoice and delight in that good which they have brought with them, that is, they cannot do any meritorious act, by which they could merit anything, because in this life alone can they merit and sin, according as they please, with free-will.

“These then do not await, with fear, the Divine judgment, but with joy, and the face of My Son will not seem to them terrible, or full of hatred, because they finished their lives in love and affection for Me, and good-will toward their neighbor. So thou seest then, that the transformation is not in His face, when He comes to judge with My Divine Majesty, but in the vision of those who will be judged by Him. To the damned He will appear with hatred and with justice. And to the saved with love and mercy.”

How, after the General Judgment, the pain of the damned will increase.

“I HAVE told thee of the dignity of the Righteous, so that thou mayest the better know the misery of the damned. For this is another of their pains, namely, the vision of the bliss of the righteous, which is to them an increase of pain, as, to the righteous, the damnation of the damned is an increase of exultation in My goodness. As light is seen better near darkness, and darkness near light, so the sight of the Blessed increases their pain. With pain they await the Last Day of Judgment, because they see, following it, an increase of pain to themselves. And so will it be, because when that terrible voice shall say to them, ‘Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment,’ the soul will return with the body, in the just to be glorified, and in the damned to be tortured eternally. And the aspect of My Truth, and of all the blessed ones will reproach them greatly, and make them ashamed, and the worm of conscience will gnaw the pith of the tree, that is the soul, and also the bark outside, which is the body. They will be reproached by the Blood that was shed for them, and by the works of mercy, spiritual and temporal, which I did for them by means of My Son, and which they should have done for their neighbor, as is contained in the Holy Gospel. They will be reproved for their cruelty towards their neighbor, for their pride and self-love, for their filthiness and avarice; and when they see the mercy that they have received from Me, their reproof will seem to be intensified in harshness. At the time of death, the soul only is reproved, but, at the General Judgment, the soul is reproved together with the body, because the body has been the companion and instrument of the soul—to do good and evil according as the free-will pleased. Every work, good or bad, is done by means of the body. And, therefore, justly, My daughter, glory and infinite good are rendered to My elect ones with their glorified body, rewarding them for the toils they bore for Me, together with the soul. And to the perverse ones will be rendered eternal pains by means of their body, because their body was the instrument of evil. Wherefore, being their body, restored, their pains will revive and increase at the aspect of My Son, their miserable sensuality with its filthiness, in the vision of their nature (that is, the humanity of Christ), united with the purity of My Deity, and of this mass of their Adam nature raised above all the choirs of Angels, and themselves, by their own fault, sunk into the depths of Hell. And they will see generosity and mercy shining in the blessed ones, who receive the fruit of the Blood of the Lamb, the pains that they have borne remaining as ornaments on their bodies, like the dye upon the cloth, not by virtue of the body but only out of the fullness of the soul, representing in the body the fruit of its labor, because it was the companion of the soul in the working of virtue. As in the mirror is represented the face of the man, so in the body is represented the fruit of bodily toils, in the way that I have told thee.

“The pain and confusion of the darkened ones, on seeing so great a dignity (of which they are deprived), will increase, and their bodies will appear the sign of the wickedness they have committed, with pain and torture. And when they hear that terrible speech, ‘Go, cursed ones, to the Eternal Fire,’ the soul and the body will go to be with the devil without any remedy or hope—each one being wrapped up in diverse filth of earth, according to his evil works. The miser with the filth of avarice, wrapping himself up with the worldly substance which he loved disordinately, and the burning in the fire; the cruel one with cruelty; the foul man with foulness and miserable concupiscence; the unjust with his injustice; the envious with envy; and the hater of his neighbor with hatred. And inordinate self-love, whence were born all their ills, will be burnt with intolerable pain, as the head and principle of every evil, in company with pride. So that body and soul together will be punished in diverse ways. Thus miserably do they arrive at their end who go by the lower way, that is, by the river, not turning back to see their sins and My mercy. And they arrive at the Gate of the Lie, because they follow the doctrine of the devil, who is the father of lies; and this devil is their Door, through which they go to Eternal Damnation, as has been said, as the elect and My sons, keeping by the way above, that is by the Bridge, follow the Way of Truth, and this Truth is the Door, and therefore said My Truth, ‘No one can go to the Father but by Me.’ He is the Door and the Way through which they pass to enter the Sea Pacific. It is the contrary for those who have kept the Way of the Lie, which leads them to the water of death. And it is to this that the devil calls them, and they are as blind and mad, and do not perceive it, because they have lost the light of faith. The devil says, as it were, to them: ‘Whosoever thirsts for the water of death, let him come and I will give it to him.’”

Of the use of temptations, and how every soul in her extremity sees her final place either of pain or of glory, before she is separated from the body.

“THE devil, dearest daughter, is the instrument of My justice to torment the souls who have miserably offended Me. And I have set him in this life to tempt and molest My creatures, not for My creatures to be conquered, but that they may conquer, proving their virtue, and receive from Me the glory of victory. And no one should fear any battle or temptation of the devil that may come to him, because I have made My creatures strong, and have given them strength of will, fortified in the Blood of my Son, which will, neither devil nor creature can move, because it is yours, given by Me. You therefore, with free arbitration, can hold it or leave it, according as you please. It is an arm, which, if you place it in the hands of the devil, straightway becomes a knife, with which he strikes you and slays you. But if man do not give this knife of his will into the hands of the devil, that is, if he do not consent to his temptations and molestations, he will never be injured by the guilt of sin in any temptation, but will even be fortified by it, when the eye of his intellect is opened to see My love which allowed him to be tempted, so as to arrive at virtue, by being proved. For one does not arrive at virtue except through knowledge of self, and knowledge of Me, which knowledge is more perfectly acquired in the time of temptation, because then man knows himself to be nothing, being unable to lift off himself the pains and vexations which he would flee; and he knows Me in his will, which is fortified by My goodness, so that it does not yield to these thoughts. And he has seen that My love permits these temptations, for the devil is weak, and by himself can do nothing, unless I allow him. And I let him tempt, through love, and not through hatred, that you may conquer, and not that you may be conquered, and that you may come to a perfect knowledge of yourself, and of Me, and that virtue may be proved, for it is not proved except by its contrary. Thou seest, then, that he is my minister to torture the damned in Hell, and in this life, to exercise and prove virtue in the soul. Not that it is the intention of the devil to prove virtue in you (for he has not love), but rather to deprive you of it, and this he cannot do, if you do not wish it. Now thou seest, then, how great is the foolishness of men in making themselves feeble, when I have made them strong, and in putting themselves into the hands of the devil. Wherefore, know, that at the moment of death, they, having passed their life under the lordship of the devil (not that they were forced to do so, for as I told you they cannot be forced, but they voluntarily put themselves into his hands), and, arriving at the extremity of their death under this perverse lordship, they await no other judgment than that of their own conscience, and desperately, despairingly, come to eternal damnation. Wherefore Hell, through their hate, surges up to them in the extremity of death, and before they get there, they take hold of it, by means of their lord the devil. As the righteous, who have lived in charity and died in love, if they have lived perfectly in virtue, illuminated with the light of faith, with perfect hope in the Blood of the Lamb, when the extremity of death comes, see the good which I have prepared for them, and embrace it with the arms of love, holding fast with pressure of love to Me, the Supreme and Eternal Good. And so they taste Eternal Life before they have left the mortal body, that is, before the soul be separated from the body. Others who have passed their lives, and have arrived at the last extremity of death with an ordinary charity (not in that great perfection), embrace My mercy with the same light of faith and hope that had those perfect ones, but, in them, it is imperfect, for, because they were imperfect, they constrained My mercy, counting My mercy greater than their sins. The wicked sinners do the contrary, for, seeing, with desperation, their destination, they embrace it with hatred, as I told thee. So that neither the one nor the other waits for judgment, but, in departing this life, they receive every one their place, as I have told thee, and they taste it and possess it before they depart from the body, at the extremity of death—the damned with hatred and with despair, and the perfect ones with love and the light of faith and with the hope of the Blood. And the imperfect arrive at the place of Purgatory, with mercy and the same faith.”

How the Devil gets hold of souls, under pretense of some good: and, how those are deceived who keep by the river, and not by the aforesaid Bridge, for, wishing to fly pains, they fall into them; and of the vision of a tree, that this soul once had.

“I HAVE told thee that the devil invites men to the water of death, that is, to that which he has, and, blinding them with the pleasures and conditions of the world, he catches them with the hook of pleasure, under the pretense of good, because in no other way could he catch them, for they would not allow themselves to be caught if they saw that no good or pleasure to themselves were to be obtained thereby. For the soul, from her nature, always relishes good, though it is true that the soul, blinded by self-love, does not know and discern what is true good, and of profit to the soul and to the body. And, therefore, the devil, seeing them blinded by self-love, iniquitously places before them diverse and various delights, colored so as to have the appearance of some benefit or good; and he gives to every one according to his condition and those principal vices to which he sees him to be most disposed—of one kind to the secular, of another to the religious, and others to prelates and noblemen, according to their different conditions. I have told thee this, because I now speak to thee of those who drown themselves in the river, and who care for nothing but themselves, to love themselves to My injury, and I will relate to thee their end.

“Now I want to show thee how they deceive themselves, and how, wishing to flee troubles, they fall into them. For, because it seems to them that following Me, that is, walking by the way of the Bridge, the Word, My Son, is great toil, they

draw back, fearing the thorn. This is because they are blinded and do not know or see the Truth, as, thou knowest, I showed thee in the beginning of thy life, when thou didst pray Me to have mercy on the world, and draw it out of the darkness of mortal sin. Thou knowest that I then showed thee Myself under the figure of a Tree, of which thou sawest neither the beginning nor the end, so that thou didst not see that the roots were united with the earth of your humanity. At the foot of the Tree, if thou rememberest well, there was a certain thorn, from which thorn all those who love their own sensuality kept away, and ran to a mountain of Lolla, in which thou didst figure to thyself all the delights of the world. That Lolla seemed to be of corn and was not, and, therefore, as thou didst see, many souls thereon died of hunger, and many, recognizing the deceptions of the world, returned to the Tree and passed the thorn, which is the deliberation of the will. Which deliberation, before it is made, is a thorn which appears to man to stand in the way of following the Truth. And conscience always fights on one side, and sensuality on the other; but as soon as he, with hatred and displeasure of himself, manfully makes up his mind, saying, ‘I wish to follow Christ crucified,’ he breaks at once the thorn, and finds inestimable sweetness, as I showed thee then, some finding more and some less, according to their disposition and desire. And thou knowest that then I said to thee, ‘I am your God, unmoving and unchangeable,’ and I do not draw away from any creature who wants to come to Me. I have shown them the Truth, making Myself visible to them, and I have shown them what it is to love anything without Me. But they, as if blinded by the fog of disordinate love, know neither Me nor themselves. Thou seest how deceived they are, choosing rather to die of hunger than to pass a little thorn. And they cannot escape enduring pain, for no one can pass through this life without a cross, far less those who travel by the lower way. Not that My servants pass without pain, but their pain is alleviated. And because—by sin, as I said to thee above—the world germinates thorns and tribulations, and because this river flows with tempestuous waters, I gave you the Bridge, so that you might not be drowned.

“I have shown thee how they are deceived by a disordinate fear, and how I am your God, immovable, who am not an Acceptor of persons but of holy desire. And this I have shown thee under the figure of the Tree, as I told thee.”

How, the world having germinated thorns, who those are whom they do not harm; although no one passes this life without pain.

“**N**OW I want to show thee to whom the thorns and tribulations, that the world germinated through sin, do harm, and to whom they do not. And as, so far, I have shown thee the damnation of sinners, together with My goodness, and have told thee how they are deceived by their own sensuality, now I wish to tell thee how it is only they themselves who are injured by the thorns. No one born passes this life without pain, bodily or mental. Bodily pain My servants bear, but their minds are free, that is, they do not feel the weariness of the pain; for their will is accorded with Mine, and it is the will that gives trouble to man. Pain of mind and of body have those, of whom I have narrated to thee, who, in this life, taste the earnest money of Hell, as My servants taste the earnest money of Eternal Life. Knowest thou what is the special good of the blessed ones? It is having their desire filled with what they desire; wherefore desiring Me, they have Me, and taste Me without any revolt, for they have left the burden of the body, which was a law that opposed the spirit, and came between it and the perfect knowledge of the Truth, preventing it from seeing Me face to face. But after the soul has left the weight of the body, her desire is full, for, desiring to see Me, she sees Me, in which vision is her bliss; and seeing she knows, and knowing she loves, and loving she tastes Me, Supreme and Eternal Good, and, in tasting Me, she is satisfied, and her desire is fulfilled, that is, the desire she had to see and know Me; wherefore desiring she has, and having she desires. And as I told thee pain is far from the desire, and weariness from the satisfaction of it. So thou seest that My servants are blessed principally in seeing and in knowing Me, in which vision and knowledge their will is fulfilled, for they have that which they desired to have, and so are they satisfied. Wherefore I told thee that the tasting of eternal life consisted especially in having that which the will desires, and thus being satisfied; but know that the will is satisfied in seeing and knowing Me, as I have told thee. In this life then, they taste the earnest money of Eternal Life, tasting the above, with which I have told thee they will be satisfied.

“But how have they the earnest money in this present life? I reply to thee, they have it in seeing My goodness in themselves, and in the knowledge of My Truth, which knowledge, the intellect (which is the eye of the soul) illuminated in Me, possesses. This eye has the pupil of the most holy Faith, which light of faith enables the soul to discern, to know, and to follow the way and the doctrine of My Truth—the Word Incarnate; and without this pupil of faith she would not see, except as a man who has the form of the eye, but who has covered the pupil (which causes the eye to see) with a cloth. So the pupil of the intellect is faith, and if the soul has covered it with the cloth of infidelity, drawn over it by self-love, she does not see, but only has the form of the eye without the light, because she has hidden it. Thus thou seest, that in seeing they know, and in knowing they love, and in loving they deny and lose their self-will. Their own will lost, they clothe themselves in Mine, and I will nothing but your sanctification. At once they set to, turning their back to the way below, and begin to ascend by the Bridge, and pass over the thorns, which do not hurt them, their feet being shod with the affection of My love. For I told thee that My servants suffered corporally but not mentally, because the sensitive will, which gives pain and afflicts the mind of the creature, is dead. Wherefore, the will not being there, neither is there any pain. They bear everything with reverence, deeming themselves favored in having tribulation for My sake, and they desire nothing but what I desire. If I allow the devil to trouble

them, permitting temptations to prove them in virtue, as I told thee above, they resist with their will fortified in Me, humiliating themselves, and deeming themselves unworthy of peace and quiet of mind and deserving of pain, and so they proceed with cheerfulness and self-knowledge, without painful affliction. And if tribulations on man's account, or infirmity, or poverty, or change of worldly condition, or loss of children, or of other much loved creatures (all of which are thorns that the earth produced after sin) come upon them, they endure them all with the light of reason and holy faith, looking to Me, who am the Supreme Good, and who cannot desire other than good, for which I permit these tribulations through love, and not through hatred. And they that love Me recognize this, and, examining themselves, they see their sins, and understand by the light of faith, that good must be rewarded and evil punished. And they see that every little sin merits infinite pain, because it is against Me, who am Infinite Good, wherefore they deem themselves favored because I wish to punish them in this life, and in this finite time; they drive away sin with contrition of heart, and with perfect patience do they merit, and their labors are rewarded with infinite good. Hereafter they know that all labor in this life is small, on account of the shortness of time. Time is as the point of a needle and no more; and, when time has passed labor is ended, therefore thou seest that the labor is small. They endure with patience, and the thorns they pass through do not touch their heart, because their heart is drawn out of them and united to Me by the affection of love. It is a good truth then that these do taste Eternal Life, receiving the earnest money of it in this life, and that, though they walk on thorns, they are not pricked, because as I told thee, they have known My Supreme Goodness, and sought for it where it was to be found, that is in the Word, My Only-begotten Son."

How this soul was in great bitterness, on account of the blindness of those who are drowned below in the river.

THEN that soul, tormented by desire, considering her own imperfections and those of others, was saddened to hear of and to see the great blindness of creatures, notwithstanding the great goodness of GOD, in having placed nothing in this life, no matter in what condition, that could be an impediment to the salvation of creatures, but rather arranged for the exercising and proving of virtue in them. And, notwithstanding all this, she saw them, through self-love and disordinate affection, go under by the river and arrive at eternal damnation, and many who were in the river and had begun to come out, turn back again, scandalized at her, because they had heard of the sweet goodness of GOD, who had deigned to manifest Himself to her. And, for this, she was in bitterness, and fixing the eye of her intellect on the Eternal Father, she said: "Oh, Inestimable Love, great is the delusion of Thy creatures. I would that, when it is pleasing to Thy Goodness, Thou wouldest more clearly explain to me the three steps figured in the Body of Thy only Son, and what method should be used so as to come entirely out of the depths and to keep the way of Thy Truth, and who are those who ascend the staircase."

How the three steps figured in the Bridge, that is, in the Son of God, signify the three powers of the soul.

THEN the Divine Goodness, regarding with the eye of His mercy, the hunger and desire of that soul, said: "Oh, My most delightful daughter, I am not a despiser, but the fulfiller of holy desire, and therefore I will show and declare to thee that which thou askest Me. Thou askest Me to explain to thee the figure of three steps, and to tell thee what method they who want to come out of the river must use, to be able to ascend the Bridge. And, although above, in relating to thee the delusion and blindness of men, tasting in this life the earnest-money of Hell, and, as martyrs of the devil, receiving damnation, I showed thee the methods they should use; nevertheless, now I will declare it to thee more fully, satisfying thy desire. Thou knowest that every evil is founded in self-love, and that self-love is a cloud that takes away the light of reason, which reason holds in itself the light of faith, and one is not lost without the other. The soul I created in My image and likeness, giving her memory, intellect, and will. The intellect is the most noble part of the soul, and is moved by the affection, and nourishes it, and the hand of love—that is, the affection—fills the memory with the remembrance of Me and of the benefits received, which it does with care and gratitude, and so one power spurs on another, and the soul is nourished in the life of grace.

"The soul cannot live without love, but always wants to love something, because she is made of love, and, by love, I created her. And therefore I told thee that the affection moved the intellect, saying, as it were, '*I will love, because the food on which I feed is love.*' Then the intellect, feeling itself awakened by the affection, says, as it were, '*If thou wilt love, I will give thee that which thou canst love.*' And at once it arises, considering carefully the dignity of the soul, and the indignity into which she has fallen through sin. In the dignity of her being it tastes My inestimable goodness, and the increase charity with which I created her, and, in contemplating her misery, it discovers and tastes My mercy, and sees how, through mercy, I have lent her time and drawn her out of darkness. Then the affection nourishes itself in love, opening the mouth of holy desire, with which it eats hatred and displeasure of its own sensuality, united with true humility and perfect patience, which it drew from holy hatred. The virtues conceived, they give birth to themselves perfectly and imperfectly, according as the soul exercises perfection in herself, as I will tell thee below. So, on the contrary, if the sensual affection wants to love sensual things, the eye of the intellect set before itself for its sole object transitory things, with self-love, displeasure of virtue, and love of vice,

whence she draws pride and impatience, and the memory is filled with nothing but that which the affection presents to it. This love so dazzles the eye of the intellect that it can discern and see nothing but such glittering objects. It is the very brightness of the things that causes the intellect to perceive them and the affection to love them; for had worldly things no such brightness there would be no sin, for man, by his nature, cannot desire anything but good, and vice, appearing to him thus, under color of the soul's good, causes him to sin. But, because the eye, on account of its blindness, does not discern, and knows not the truth, it errs, seeking good and delights there where they are not.

"I have already told thee that the delights of the world, without Me, are venomous thorns, and, that the vision of the intellect is deluded by them, and the affection of the will is deluded into loving them, and the memory into retaining remembrance of them. The unity of these powers of the soul is so great that I cannot be offended by one without all the others offending Me at the same time, because the one presents to the other, as I told thee, good or evil, according to the pleasure of the free will. This free will is bound to the affection, and it moves as it pleases, either with the light of reason or without it. Your reason is attached to Me when your will does not, by disordinate love, cut it off from Me; you have also in you the law of perversity, that continually fights against the Spirit. You have, then, two parts in you—sensuality and reason. Sensuality is appointed to be the servant, so that, with the instrument of the body, you may prove and exercise the virtues. The soul is free, liberated from sin by the Blood of My Son, and she cannot be dominated unless she consent with her will, which is controlled by her free choice, and when this free choice agrees with the will, it becomes one thing with it. And I tell thee truly, that, when the soul undertakes to gather together, with the hand of free choice, her powers in My Name, then are assembled all the actions, both spiritual and temporal, that the creature can do, and free choice gets rid of sensuality and binds itself with reason. I, then, by grace, rest in the midst of them; and this is what My truth, the Word Incarnate, meant, when He said: '*When there are two or three or more gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.*' And this is the truth. I have already told thee that no one could come to Me except by Him, and therefore did I make of Him a Bridge with three steps. And those three steps figure, as I will narrate to thee below, the three states of the soul."

How if the three aforesaid powers are not united, there cannot be perseverance, without which no man arrives at his end.

"**I**HAVE explained to thee the figure of the three steps, in general, as the three powers of the soul, and no one who wishes to pass by the Bridge and doctrine of My Truth can mount one without the other, and the soul cannot persevere except by the union of her three powers. Of which I told thee above, when thou askest Me, how the voyagers could come out of the river. There are two goals, and, for the attainment of either, perseverance is needful—they are vice and virtue. If thou desire to arrive at life, thou must persevere in virtue, and if thou would have eternal death, thou must persevere in vice. Thus it is with perseverance that they who want life arrive at Me who am Life, and with perseverance that they who taste the water of death arrive at the Devil."

An exposition on Christ's words: "Whosoever thirsteth, let him come to Me and drink."

"**Y**OU were all invited, generally and in particular, by My Truth, when He cried in the Temple, saying '*Whosoever thirsteth, let him come to Me and drink, for I am the Fountain of the Water of Life.*' He did not say '*Go to the Father and drink,*' but He said '*Come to Me.*' He spoke thus, because in Me, the Father, there can be no pain, but in My Son there can be pain. And you, while you are pilgrims and wayfarers in this mortal life, cannot be without pain, because the earth, through sin, brought forth thorns. And why did He say '*Let him come to Me and drink?*' Because whoever follows His doctrine, whether in the most perfect way or by dwelling in the life of common charity, finds to drink, tasting the fruit of the Blood, through the union of the Divine nature with the human nature. And you, finding yourselves in Him, find yourselves also in Me, who am the Sea Pacific, because I am one substance with Him, and He with Me. So that you are invited to the Fountain of Living Water of Grace, and it is right for you, with perseverance, to keep by Him who is made for you a Bridge, not being turned back by any contrary wind that may arise, either of prosperity or adversity, and to persevere till you find Me, who am the Giver of the Water of Life, by means of this sweet and amorous Word, My Only-begotten Son. And why did He say: '*I am the Fountain of Living Water?*' Because He was the Fountain which contained Me, the Giver of the Living Water, by means of the union of the Divine with the human nature. Why did He say '*Come to Me and drink?*' Because you cannot pass this mortal life without pain, and in Me, the Father, there can be no pain, but in Him there can be pain, and therefore of Him did I make for you a Bridge. No one can come to Me except by Him, as He told you in the words: '*No one can come to the Father except by Me.*'

"Now thou hast seen to what way thou shouldest keep, and how, namely with perseverance, otherwise thou shalt not drink, for perseverance receives the crown of glory and victory in the life everlasting."

The general method by which every rational creature can come out of the sea of the world, and go by the aforesaid holy Bridge.

“I WILL now return to the three steps, which you must climb in order to issue from the river without drowning, and attain to the Living Water, to which you are invited, and to desire My Presence in the midst of you. For in this way, in which you should follow, I am in your midst, reposing, by grace, in your souls. In order to have desire to mount the steps, you must have thirst, because only those who thirst are invited: ‘*Whosoever thirsteth, let him come to Me and drink.*’ He who has no thirst will not persevere, for either fatigue causes him to stop, or pleasure, and he does not care to carry the vessel with which he may get the water, and neither does he care for the company, and alone he cannot go, and he turns back at the smallest prick of persecution, for he loves it not. He is afraid because he is alone; were he accompanied he would not fear, and had he ascended the three steps he would not have been alone, and would, therefore, have been secure. You must then have thirst and gather yourselves together, as it is said, ‘*two or three or more.*’

“Why is it said ‘*two or three or more*’? Because there are not two without three, nor three without two, neither three nor two without more. The number one is excluded, for, unless a man has a companion, I cannot be in the midst; this is no indifferent trifle, for he who is wrapped up in self-love is solitary.

“Why is he solitary? Because he is separated from My grace and the love of his neighbor, and being, by sin, deprived of Me, he turns to that which is nought, because I am He that is. So that he who is solitary, that is, who is alone in self-love, is not mentioned by My Truth and is not acceptable to Me. He says then: ‘*If there be two or three or more gathered together in My name, I will be in the midst of them.*’ I said to thee that two were not without three, nor three without two, and so it is. Thou knowest that the commandments of the Law are completely contained in two, and if these two are not observed the Law is not observed. The two commandments are to love Me above everything, and thy neighbor as thyself, which two are the beginning, the middle and the end of the Law. These two cannot be gathered together in My Name, without three, that is without the congregation of the powers of the soul, the memory, the intellect, and the will; the memory to retain the remembrance of My benefits and My goodness, the intellect to gaze into the ineffable love, which I have shown thee by means of My Only-begotten Son, whom I have placed as the object of the vision of your intellect, so that, in Him, you behold the fire of My charity, and the will to love and desire Me, who am your End. When these virtues and powers of the soul are congregated together in My Name, I am in the midst of them by grace, and a man, who is full of My love and that of his neighbor, suddenly finds himself the companion of many and royal virtues. Then the appetite of the soul is disposed to thirst. Thirst, I say, for virtue, and the honor of My Name and salvation of souls, and his every other thirst is spent and dead, and he then proceeds securely without any servile fear, having ascended the first step of the affection, for the affection, stripped of self-love, mounts above itself and above transitory things, or, if he will still hold them, he does so according to My Will—that is, with a holy and true fear, and love of virtue. He then finds that he has attained to the second step—that is, to the light of the intellect, which is, through Christ crucified, mirrored in cordial love of Me, for through Him have I shown My love to man. He finds peace and quiet, because the memory is filled with My love. Thou knowest that an empty thing, when touched, resounds, but not so when it is full. So memory, being filled with the light of the intellect, and the affection with love, on being moved by the tribulations or delights of the world, will not resound with disordinate merriment or with impatience, because they are full of Me, who am every good.

“Having climbed the three steps, he finds that the three powers of the soul have been gathered together by his reason in My Name. And his soul, having gathered together the two commandments, that is love of Me and of the neighbor, finds herself accompanied by Me, who am her strength and security, and walks safely because I am in the midst of her. Wherefore then he follows on with anxious desire, thirsting after the way of Truth, in which way he finds the Fountain of the Water of Life, through his thirst for My honor and his own salvation and that of his neighbor, without which thirst he would not be able to arrive at the Fountain. He walks on, carrying the vessel of the heart, emptied of every affection and disordinate love of the world, but filled immediately as it is emptied with other things, for nothing can remain empty, and, being without disordinate love for transitory things, it is filled with love of celestial things, and sweet Divine love, with which he arrives at the Fountain of the Water of Life, and passes through the Door of Christ crucified, and tastes the Water of Life, finding himself in Me, the Sea Pacific.”

How this devoted soul looking in the Divine mirror saw the creatures going in diverse ways.

THEN that soul, tormented with intense desire, gazing into the sweet Divine mirror, saw creatures setting out to attain their end in diverse ways and with diverse considerations. She saw that many began to mount, feeling themselves pricked by servile fear, that is, fearing their own personal pain, and she saw others, practicing this first state, arriving at the second state, but few she saw who arrived at the greatest perfection.

How servile fear is not sufficient, without the love of virtue, to give Eternal Life; and how the law

of fear and that of love are united.

THEN the goodness of God, wishing to satisfy the desire of that soul, said, "Dost thou see those? They have arisen with servile fear from the vomit of mortal sin, but, if they do not arise with love of virtue, servile fear alone is not sufficient to give eternal life. But love with holy fear is sufficient, because the law is founded in love and holy fear. The Old Law was the law of fear, that was given by Me to Moses, by which Law they who committed sin suffered the penalty of it. The New Law is the law of love, given by the Word of My Only-begotten Son, and is founded in love alone. The New Law does not break the Old Law, but rather fulfills it, as said My Truth, '*I come not to destroy the law, but to fulfill it.*' And He united the law of fear with that of love. Through love was taken away the imperfection of the fear of the penalty, and the perfection of holy fear remained, that is, the fear of offending, not on account of one's own damnation, but of offending Me, who am Supreme Good. So that the imperfect law was made perfect with the law of love. Wherefore, after My Only-begotten Son came and brought the fire of My charity into your humanity with abundance of mercy, the penalty of the sins committed by humanity was taken away, that is, he who offended was no longer punished suddenly, as was of old given and ordained in the law of Moses.

"There is, therefore, no need for servile fear; and this does not mean that sin is not punished, but that the punishment is reserved, unless, that is to say, the person punish himself in this life with perfect contrition. For, in the other life, the soul is separated from the body, wherefore while man lives is his time for mercy, but when he is dead comes the time of justice. He ought, then, to arise from servile fear, and arrive at love and holy fear of Me, otherwise there is no remedy against his falling back again into the river, and reaching the waters of tribulation, and seeking the thorns of consolation, for all consolations are thorns that pierce the soul who loves them disordinately."

How, by exercising oneself in servile fear, which is the state of imperfection, by which is meant the first step of the holy Bridge, one arrives at the second step, which is the state of perfection.

"ITOLD thee that no one could go by the Bridge or come out of the river without climbing the three steps, which is the truth. There are some who climb imperfectly, and some perfectly, and some climb with the greatest perfection. The first are those who are moved by servile fear, and have climbed so far being imperfectly gathered together; that is to say, the soul, having seen the punishment which follows her sin, climbs; and gathers together her memory to recollect her vice, her intellect to see the punishment which she expects to receive for her fault, and her will to move her to hate that fault. And let us consider this to be the first step and the first gathering together of the powers of the soul, which should be exercised by the light of the intellect with the pupil of the eye of holy faith, which looks, not only at the punishment of sin, but at the fruit of virtue, and the love which I bear to the soul, so that she may climb with love and affection, and stripped of servile fear. And doing so, such souls will become faithful and not unfaithful servants, serving Me through love and not through fear, and if, with hatred of sin, they employ their minds to dig out the root of their self-love with prudence, constancy, and perseverance they will succeed in doing so. But there are many who begin their course climbing so slowly, and render their debt to Me by such small degrees, and with such negligence and ignorance, that they suddenly faint, and every little breeze catches their sails, and turns their prow backwards. Wherefore, because they imperfectly climb to the first Step of the Bridge of Christ crucified, they do not arrive at the second step of His Heart."

Of the imperfection of those who love God for their own profit, delight, and consolation.

"SOME there are who have become faithful servants, serving Me with fidelity without servile fear of punishment, but rather with love. This very love, however, if they serve Me with a view to their own profit, or the delight and pleasure which they find in Me, is imperfect. Dost thou know what proves the imperfection of this love? The withdrawal of the consolations which they found in Me, and the insufficiency and short duration of their love for their neighbor, which grows weak by degrees, and oftentimes disappears. Towards Me their love grows weak when, on occasion, in order to exercise them in virtue and raise them above their imperfection, I withdraw from their minds My consolation and allow them to fall into battles and perplexities. This I do so that, coming to perfect self-knowledge, they may know that of themselves they are nothing and have no grace, and accordingly in time of battle fly to Me, as their Benefactor, seeking Me alone, with true humility, for which purpose I treat them thus, withdrawing from them consolation indeed, but not grace. At such a time these weak ones, of whom I speak, relax their energy, impatiently turning backwards, and sometimes abandon, under color of virtue, many of their exercises, saying to themselves, *This labor does not profit me.* All this they do, because they feel themselves deprived of mental consolation. Such a soul acts imperfectly, for she has not yet unwound the bandage of spiritual self-love, for, had she unwound it she would see that, in truth, everything proceeds from Me, that no leaf of a tree falls to the ground without My providence, and that what I give and promise to My creatures, I give and promise to them for their sanctification, which is the good and the end for which I created them. My creatures should see and know that I wish nothing but their good, through the Blood of My Only-begotten Son, in which they are washed from their iniquities. By this Blood they are enabled to know My Truth, how, in order to give them

Eternal Life, I created them in My image and likeness and re-created them to grace with the Blood of My Son, making them sons of adoption. But, since they are imperfect, they make use of Me only for their own profit, relaxing their love for their neighbor. Thus, those in the first state come to nought through the fear of enduring pain, and those in the second, because they slacken their pace, ceasing to render service to their neighbor, and withdrawing their charity if they see their own profit or consolation withdrawn from them: this happens because their love was originally impure, for they gave to their neighbor the same imperfect love which they gave to Me, that is to say, a love based only on desire of their own advantage. If, through a desire for perfection, they do not recognize this imperfection of theirs, it is impossible that they should not turn back. For those who desire Eternal Life, a pure love, prescinding from themselves, is necessary, for it is not enough for eternal life to fly sin from fear of punishment, or to embrace virtue from the motive of one's own advantage. Sin should be abandoned because it is displeasing to Me, and virtue should be loved for My sake. It is true that, generally speaking, every person is first called in this way, but this is because the soul herself is at first imperfect, from which imperfection she must advance to perfection, either while she lives, by a generous love to Me with a pure and virtuous heart that takes no thought for herself, or, at least, in the moment of death, recognizing her own imperfection, with the purpose, had she but time, of serving Me, irrespectively of herself. It was with this imperfect love that St. Peter loved the sweet and good Jesus, My Only-begotten Son, enjoying most pleasantly His sweet conversation, but, when the time of trouble came, he failed, and so disgraceful was his fall, that, not only could he not bear any pain himself, but his terror of the very approach of pain caused him to fall, and deny the Lord, with the words, '*I have never known Him.*' The soul who has climbed this step with servile fear and mercenary love alone, falls into many troubles. Such souls should arise and become sons, and serve Me, irrespective of themselves, for I, who am the Rewarder of every labor, render to each man according to his state and his labor; wherefore, if these souls do not abandon the exercise of holy prayer and their other good works, but go on, with perseverance, to increase their virtues, they will arrive at the state of filial love, because I respond to them with the same love, with which they love Me, so that, if they love Me, as a servant does his master, I pay them their wages according to their deserts, but I do not reveal Myself to them, because secrets are revealed to a friend, who has become one thing with his friend, and not to a servant. Yet it is true, that a servant may so advance by the virtuous love which he bears to his master, as to become a very dear friend, and so do some of these of whom I have spoken, but while they remain in the state of mercenary love, I do not manifest Myself to them. If they, through displeasure at their imperfection, and love of virtue, dig up, with hatred, the root of spiritual self-love, and mount to the throne of conscience, reasoning with themselves, so as to quell the motions of servile fear in their heart, and to correct mercenary love by the light of the holy Faith, they will be so pleasing to Me, that they will attain to the love of the friend. And I will manifest Myself to them, as My Truth said in these words: '*He who loves Me shall be one with Me and I with him, and I will manifest Myself to him and we will dwell together.*' This is the state of two dear friends, for though they are two in body, yet they are one in soul through the affection of love, because love transforms the lover into the object loved, and where two friends have one soul, there can be no secret between them, wherefore My Truth said: '*I will come and we will dwell together,*' and this is the truth."

Of the way in which God manifests Himself to the soul who loves Him.

“KNOWEST thou how I manifest Myself to the soul who loves Me in truth, and follows the doctrine of My sweet and amorous Word? In many is My virtue manifested in the soul in proportion to her desire, but I make three special manifestations. The first manifestation of My virtue, that is to say, of My love and charity in the soul, is made through the Word of My Son, and shown in the Blood, which He spilled with such fire of love. Now this charity is manifested in two ways; first, in general, to ordinary people, that is to those who live in the ordinary grace of God. It is manifested to them by the many and diverse benefits which they receive from Me. The second mode of manifestation, which is developed from the first, is peculiar to those who have become My friends in the way mentioned above, and is known through a sentiment of the soul, by which they taste, know, prove, and feel it. This second manifestation, however, is in men themselves; they manifesting Me, through the affection of their love. For though I am no Acceptor of creatures, I am an Acceptor of holy desires, and Myself in the soul in that precise degree of perfection which she seeks in Me. Sometimes I manifest Myself (and this is also a part of the second manifestation) by endowing men with the spirit of prophecy, showing them the things of the future. This I do in many and diverse ways, according as I see need in the soul herself and in other creatures. At other times the third manifestation takes place. I then form in the mind the presence of the Truth, My Only-begotten Son, in many ways, according to the will and the desire of the soul. Sometimes she seeks Me in prayer, wishing to know My power, and I satisfy her by causing her to taste and see My virtue. Sometimes she seeks Me in the wisdom of My Son, and I satisfy her by placing His wisdom before the eye of her intellect, sometimes in the clemency of the Holy Spirit and then My goodness causes her to taste the fire of Divine charity, and to conceive the true and royal virtues, which are founded on the pure love of her neighbor.”

Why Christ did not say “I will manifest My Father,” but “I will manifest Myself.”

“**T**HOU seest now how truly My Word spoke, when He said: ‘*He who loves Me shall be one with Me.*’ Because, by following His doctrine with the affection of love, you are united with Him, and, being united with Him, you are united with Me, because We are one substance together. And so it is that I manifest Myself to you, because We are one and the same substance together. Wherefore if My Truth said, ‘*I will manifest Myself to you,*’ He said the truth, because, in manifesting Himself, He manifested Me, and, in manifesting Me, He manifested Himself. But why did He not say, ‘*I will manifest My Father to you?*’ For three reasons in particular. First, because He wished to show that He and I are not separate from each other, on which account He also made the following reply to St. Philip, when he said to Him, ‘*Show us the Father, and it is enough for us.*’ My Word said, ‘*Who sees Me sees the Father, and who sees the Father sees Me.*’ This He said because He was one substance with Me, and that which He had, He had from Me, I having nothing from Him; wherefore, again, He said to Judas, ‘*My doctrine is not Mine, but My Father’s who sent Me,*’ because My Son proceeds from Me, not I from Him, though I with Him and He with Me are but one substance. For this reason He did not say ‘*I will manifest the Father,*’ but ‘*I will manifest Myself,*’ being one substance with the Father. The second reason was because, in manifesting Himself to you, He did not present to you anything He had not received from Me, the Father. These words, then, mean, the Father has manifested Himself to Me, because I am one substance with Him, and I will manifest to you, by means of Myself, Me and Him. The third reason was, because I, being invisible, could not be seen by you, until you should be separated from your bodies. Then, indeed, will you see Me, your GOD, and My Son, the Word, face to face. From now until after the general Resurrection, when your humanity will be conformed with the humanity of the Eternal Word, according to what I told thee in the treatise of the Resurrection, you can see Me, with the eye of the intellect alone, for, as I am, you cannot see Me now. Wherefore I veiled the Divine nature with your humanity, so that you might see Me through that medium. I, the Invisible, made Myself, as it were, visible by sending you the Word, My Son, veiled in the flesh of your humanity. He manifested Me to you. Therefore it was that He did not say ‘*I will manifest the Father to you,*’ but rather, ‘*will manifest Myself to you,*’ as if He should say, ‘*According as My Father manifests Himself to Me, will I manifest Myself to you, for, in this manifestation of Himself, He manifests Me.*’ Now therefore thou understandest why He did not say ‘*I will manifest the Father to you.*’ Both, because such a vision is impossible for you, while yet in the mortal body, and because He is one substance with Me.”

How the soul, after having mounted the first step of the Bridge, should proceed to mount the second.

“**T**HOU hast now seen how excellent is the state of him who has attained to the love of a friend; climbing with the foot of affection, he has reached the secret of the Heart, which is the second of the three steps figured in the Body of My Son. I have told thee what was meant by the three powers of the soul, and now I will show thee how they signify the three states, through which the soul passes. Before treating of the third state, I wish to show thee how a man becomes a friend and how, from a friend, he grows into a son, attaining to filial love, and how a man may know if he has become a friend. And first of how a man arrives at being a friend. In the beginning, a man serves Me imperfectly through servile fear, but, by exercise and perseverance, he arrives at the love of delight, finding his own delight and profit in Me. This is a necessary stage, by which he must pass, who would attain to perfect love, to the love that is of friend and son. I call filial love perfect, because thereby, a man receives his inheritance from Me, the Eternal Father, and because a son’s love includes that of a friend, which is why I told thee that a friend grows into a son. What means does he take to arrive thereat? I will tell thee. Every perfection and every virtue proceeds from charity, and charity is nourished by humility, which results from the knowledge and holy hatred of self, that is, sensuality. To arrive thereat, a man must persevere, and remain in the cellar of self-knowledge in which he will learn My mercy, in the Blood of My Only-begotten Son, drawing to Himself, with this love, My divine charity, exercising himself in the extirpation of his perverse self-will, both spiritual and temporal, hiding himself in his own house, as did Peter, who, after the sin of denying My Son, began to weep. Yet his lamentations were imperfect and remained so, until after the forty days, that is until after the Ascension. But when My Truth returned to Me, in His humanity, Peter and the others concealed themselves in the house, awaiting the coming of the Holy Spirit, which My Truth had promised them. They remained barred in from fear, because the soul always fears until she arrives at true love. But when they had persevered in fasting and in humble and continual prayer, until they had received the abundance of the Holy Spirit, they lost their fear, and followed and preached Christ crucified. So also the soul, who wishes to arrive at this perfection, after she has risen from the guilt of mortal sin, recognizing it for what it is, begins to weep from fear of the penalty, whence she rises to the consideration of My mercy, in which contemplation, she finds her own pleasure and profit. This is an imperfect state, and I, in order to develop perfection in the soul, after the forty days, that is after these two states, withdraw Myself from time to time, not in grace but in feeling. My Truth showed you this when He said to the disciples ‘*I will go and will return to you.*’

“Everything that He said was said primarily, and in particular, to the disciples, but referred in general to the whole present and future, to those, that is to say, who should come after. He said ‘*I will go and will return to you;*’ and so it was, for, when the Holy Spirit returned upon the disciples, He also returned, as I told you above, for the Holy Spirit did not return alone,

but came with My power, and the wisdom of the Son, who is one substance with Me, and with His own clemency, which proceeds from Me the Father, and from the Son. Now, as I told thee, in order to raise the soul from imperfection, I withdraw Myself from her sentiment, depriving her of former consolations. When she was in the guilt of mortal sin, she had separated herself from Me, and I deprived her of grace through her own guilt, because that guilt had barred the door of her desires. Wherefore the sun of grace did not shine, not through its own defect, but through the defect of the creature, who bars the door of desire. When she knows herself and her darkness, she opens the window and vomits her filth, by holy Confession. Then I, having returned to the soul by grace, withdraw Myself from her by sentiment, which I do in order to humiliate her, and cause her to seek Me in truth, and to prove her in the light of faith, so that she come to prudence. Then, if she love Me without thought of self, and with lively faith and with hatred of her own sensuality, she rejoices in the time of trouble, deeming herself unworthy of peace and quietness of mind. Now comes the second of the three things of which I told thee, that is to say: how the soul arrives at perfection, and what she does when she is perfect. This is what she does. Though she perceives that I have withdrawn Myself, she does not, on that account, look back, but perseveres with humility in her exercises, remaining barred in the house of self-knowledge, and, continuing to dwell therein, awaits, with lively faith, the coming of the Holy Spirit, that is of Me, who am the fire of charity. How does she await me? Not in idleness, but in watching and continued prayer, and not only with physical, but also with intellectual watching, that is, with the eye of her mind alert, and, watching with the light of faith, she extirpates, with hatred, the wandering thoughts of her heart, looking for the affection of My charity, and knowing that I desire nothing but her sanctification, which is certified to her in the Blood of My Son. As long as her eye thus watches, illumined by the knowledge of Me and of herself, she continues to pray with the prayer of holy desire, which is a continued prayer, and also with actual prayer, which she practices at the appointed times, according to the orders of Holy Church. This is what the soul does in order to rise from imperfection and arrive at perfection, and it is to this end, namely that she may arrive at perfection, that I withdraw from her, not by grace but by sentiment. Once more do I leave her, so that she may see and know her defects, so that, feeling herself deprived of consolation and afflicted by pain, she may recognize her own weakness, and learn how incapable she is of stability or perseverance, thus cutting down to the very root of spiritual self-love, for this should be the end and purpose of all her self-knowledge, to rise above herself, mounting the throne of conscience, and not permitting the sentiment of imperfect love to turn again in its death-struggle, but, with correction and reproof, digging up the root of self-love, with the knife of self-hatred and the love of virtue."

How an imperfect lover of God loves his neighbor also imperfectly, and of the signs of this imperfect love.

“**A**ND I would have thee know that just as every imperfection and perfection is acquired from Me, so is it manifested by means of the neighbor. And simple souls, who often love creatures with spiritual love, know this well, for, if they have received My love sincerely without any self-regarding considerations, they satisfy the thirst of their love for their neighbor equally sincerely. If a man carry away the vessel which he has filled at the fountain and then drink of it, the vessel becomes empty, but if he keep his vessel standing in the fountain, while he drinks, it always remains full. So the love of the neighbor, whether spiritual or temporal, should be drunk in Me, without any self-regarding considerations. I require that you should love Me with the same love with which I love you. This indeed you cannot do, because I loved you without being loved. All the love which you have for Me you owe to Me, so that it is not of grace that you love Me, but because you ought to do so. While I love you of grace, and not because I owe you My love. Therefore to Me, in person, you cannot repay the love which I require of you, and I have placed you in the midst of your fellows, that you may do to them that which you cannot do to Me, that is to say, that you may love your neighbor of free grace, without expecting any return from him, and what you do to him, I count as done to Me, which My Truth showed forth when He said to Paul, My persecutor—‘*Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?*’ This He said, judging that Paul persecuted Him in His faithful. This love must be sincere, because it is with the same love with which you love Me, that you must love your neighbor. Dost thou know how the imperfection of spiritual love for the creature is shown? It is shown when the lover feels pain if it appear to him that the object of his love does not satisfy or return his love, or when he sees the beloved one’s conversation turned aside from him, or himself deprived of consolation, or another loved more than he. In these and in many other ways can it be seen that his neighborly love is still imperfect, and that, though his love was originally drawn from Me, the Fountain of all love, he took the vessel out of the water, in order to drink from it. It is because his love for Me is still imperfect, that his neighborly love is so weak, and because the root of self-love has not been properly dug out. Wherefore I often permit such a love to exist, so that the soul may in this way come to the knowledge of her own imperfection, and for the same reason do I withdraw myself from the soul by sentiment, that she may be thus led to enclose herself in the house of self-knowledge, where is acquired every perfection. After which I return into her with more light and with more knowledge of My Truth, in proportion to the degree in which she refers to grace the power of slaying her own will. And she never ceases to cultivate the vine of her soul, and to root out the thorns of evil thoughts, replacing them with the stones of virtues, cemented together in the Blood of Christ crucified, which she has found on her journey across the Bridge of Christ, My Only-begotten Son. For I told thee, if thou remember, that upon the Bridge, that is, upon the doctrine of My Truth, were

built up the stones, based upon the virtue of His Blood, for it is in virtue of this Blood that the virtues give life."

A TREATISE OF PRAYER

Of the means which the soul takes to arrive at pure and generous love; and here begins the Treatise of Prayer.

“WHEN the soul has passed through the doctrine of Christ crucified, with true love of virtue and hatred of vice, and has arrived at the house of self-knowledge and entered therein, she remains, with her door barred, in watching and constant prayer, separated entirely from the consolations of the world. Why does she thus shut herself in? She does so from fear, knowing her own imperfections, and also from the desire, which she has, of arriving at pure and generous love. And because she sees and knows well that in no other way can she arrive thereat, she waits, with a lively faith for My arrival, through increase of grace in her. How is a lively faith to be recognized? By perseverance in virtue, and by the fact that the soul never turns back for anything, whatever it be, nor rises from holy prayer, for any reason except (note well) for obedience or charity’s sake. For no other reason ought she to leave off prayer, for, during the time ordained for prayer, the devil is wont to arrive in the soul, causing much more conflict and trouble than when the soul is not occupied in prayer. This he does in order that holy prayer may become tedious to the soul, tempting her often with these words: ‘This prayer avails thee nothing, for thou needest attend to nothing except thy vocal prayers.’ He acts thus in order that, becoming wearied and confused in mind, she may abandon the exercise of prayer, which is a weapon with which the soul can defend herself from every adversary, if grasped with the hand of love, by the arm of free choice in the light of the Holy Faith.”

Here, touching something concerning the Sacrament of the Body of Christ, the complete doctrine is given; and how the soul proceeds from vocal to mental prayer, and a vision is related which this devout soul once received.

“KNOW, dearest daughter, how, by humble, continual, and faithful prayer, the soul acquires, with time and perseverance, every virtue. Wherefore should she persevere and never abandon prayer, either through the illusion of the devil or her own fragility, that is to say, either on account of any thought or movement coming from her own body, or of the words of any creature. The devil often places himself upon the tongues of creatures, causing them to chatter nonsensically, with the purpose of preventing the prayer of the soul. All of this she should pass by, by means of the virtue of perseverance. Oh, how sweet and pleasant to that soul and to Me is holy prayer, made in the house of knowledge of self and of Me, opening the eye of the intellect to the light of faith, and the affections to the abundance of My charity, which was made visible to you, through My visible Only-begotten Son, who showed it to you with His blood! Which Blood inebriates the soul and clothes her with the fire of divine charity, giving her the food of the Sacrament [which is placed in the hostelry of the mystical body of the Holy Church] that is to say, the food of the Body and Blood of My Son, wholly God and wholly man, administered to you by the hand of My vicar, who holds the key of the Blood. This is that hostelry, which I mentioned to thee, standing on the Bridge, to provide food and comfort for the travellers and the pilgrims, who pass by the way of the doctrine of My Truth, lest they should faint through weakness. This food strengthens little or much, according to the desire of the recipient, whether he receives sacramentally or virtually. He receives sacramentally when he actually communicates with the Blessed Sacrament. He receives virtually when he communicates, both by desire of Communion, and by contemplation of the Blood of Christ crucified, communicating, as it were, sacramentally, with the affection of love, which is to be tasted in the Blood which, as the soul sees, was shed through love. On seeing this the soul becomes inebriated, and blazes with holy desire and satisfies herself, becoming full of love for Me and for her neighbor. Where can this be acquired? In the house of self-knowledge with holy prayer, where imperfections are lost, even as Peter and the disciples, while they remained in watching and prayer, lost their imperfection and acquired perfection. By what means is this acquired? By perseverance seasoned with the most Holy Faith.

“But do not think that the soul receives such ardor and nourishment from prayer, if she pray only vocally, as do many souls whose prayers are rather words than love. Such as these give heed to nothing except to completing Psalms and saying many *pater nosters*. And when they have once completed their appointed tale, they do not appear to think of anything further, but seem to place devout attention and love in merely vocal recitation, which the soul is not required to do, for, in doing only this, she bears but little fruit, which pleases Me but little. But if thou askest Me, whether the soul should abandon vocal prayer, since it does not seem to all that they are called to mental prayer, I should reply ‘No.’ The soul should advance by degrees, and I know well that, just as the soul is at first imperfect and afterwards perfect, so also is it with her prayer. She should nevertheless continue in vocal prayer, while she is yet imperfect, so as not to fall into idleness. But she should not say her vocal prayers without joining them to mental prayer, that is to say, that while she is reciting, she should endeavor to elevate her mind in My love, with the consideration of her own defects and of the Blood of My Only-begotten Son, wherein she finds the breadth of My charity and the remission of her sins. And this she should do, so that self-knowledge and the consideration of her

own defects should make her recognize My goodness in herself and continue her exercises with true humility. I do not wish defects to be considered in particular, but in general, so that the mind may not be contaminated by the remembrance of particular and hideous sins. But, as I said, I do not wish the soul to consider her sins, either in general or in particular, without also remembering the Blood and the broadness of My mercy, for fear that otherwise she should be brought to confusion. And together with confusion would come the devil, who has caused it, under color of contrition and displeasure of sin, and so she would arrive at eternal damnation, not only on account of her confusion, but also through the despair which would come to her, because she did not seize the arm of My mercy. This is one of the subtle devices with which the devil deludes My servants, and, in order to escape from his deceit, and to be pleasing to Me, you must enlarge your hearts and affections in My boundless mercy, with true humility. Thou knowest that the pride of the devil cannot resist the humble mind, nor can any confusion of spirit be greater than the broadness of My good mercy, if the soul will only truly hope therein. Wherefore it was, if thou remember rightly, that, once, when the devil wished to overthrow thee, by confusion, wishing to prove to thee that thy life had been deluded, and that thou hadst not followed My Will, thou didst that which was thy duty, which My goodness (which is never withheld from him who will receive it) gave thee strength to do, that is thou didst rise, humbly trusting in My mercy, and saying: '*I confess to my Creator that my life has indeed been passed in darkness, but I will hide myself in the Wounds of Christ crucified, and bathe myself in His Blood and so shall my iniquities be consumed, and with desire will I rejoice in my Creator.*' Thou rememberest that then the devil fled, and, turning round to the opposite side, he endeavored to inflate thee with pride, saying: '*Thou art perfect and pleasing to God, and there is no more need for thee to afflict thyself or to lament thy sins.*' And once more I gave thee the light to see thy true path, namely, humiliation of thyself, and thou didst answer the devil with these words: '*Wretch that I am, John the Baptist never sinned and was sanctified in his mother's womb. And I have committed so many sins, and have hardly begun to know them with grief and true contrition, seeing who God is, who is offended by me, and who I am, who offend Him.*' Then the devil, not being able to resist thy humble hope in My goodness, said to thee: '*Cursed that thou art, for I can find no way to take thee. If I put thee down through confusion, thou risest to Heaven on the wings of mercy, and if I raise thee on high, thou humblest thyself down to Hell, and when I go into Hell thou persecutest me, so that I will return to thee no more, because thou strikest me with the stick of charity.*' The soul, therefore, should season the knowledge of herself with the knowledge of My goodness, and then vocal prayer will be of use to the soul who makes it, and pleasing to Me, and she will arrive, from the vocal imperfect prayer, exercised with perseverance, at perfect mental prayer; but if she simply aims at completing her tale, and, for vocal abandons mental prayer, she will never arrive at it. Sometimes the soul will be so ignorant that, having resolved to say so many prayers vocally, and I, visiting her mind sometimes in one way, and sometimes in another, in a flash of self-knowledge or of contrition for sin, sometimes in the broadness of My charity, and sometimes by placing before her mind, in diverse ways, according to My pleasure and the desire of the soul, the presence of My Truth, she (the soul), in order to complete her tale, will abandon My visitation, that she feels, as it were, by conscience, rather than abandon that which she had begun. She should not do so, for, in so doing, she yields to a deception of the devil. The moment she feels her mind disposed by My visitation, in the many ways I have told thee, she should abandon vocal prayer; then, My visitation past, if there be time, she can resume the vocal prayers which she had resolved to say, but if she has not time to complete them, she ought not on that account to be troubled or suffer annoyance and confusion of mind; of course provided that it were not the Divine Office which clerics and religious are bound and obliged to say under penalty of offending Me, for, they must, until death, say their Office. But if they, at the hour appointed for saying it, should feel their minds drawn and raised by desire, they should so arrange as to say it before or after My visitation, so that the debt of rendering the Office be not omitted. But, in any other case, vocal prayer should be immediately abandoned for the said cause. Vocal prayer, made in the way that I have told thee, will enable the soul to arrive at perfection, and therefore she should not abandon it, but use it in the way that I have told thee.

"And so, with exercise in perseverance, she will taste prayer in truth, and the food of the Blood of My Only-begotten Son, and therefore I told thee that some communicated virtually with the Body and Blood of Christ, although not sacramentally; that is, they communicate in the affection of charity, which they taste by means of holy prayer, little or much, according to the affection with which they pray. They who proceed with little prudence and without method, taste little, and they who proceed with much, taste much. For the more the soul tries to loosen her affection from herself, and fasten it in Me with the light of the intellect, the more she knows; and the more she knows, the more she loves, and, loving much, she tastes much. Thou seest then, that perfect prayer is not attained to through many words, but through affection of desire, the soul raising herself to Me, with knowledge of herself and of My mercy, seasoned the one with the other. Thus she will exercise together mental and vocal prayer, for, even as the active and contemplative life is one, so are they. Although vocal or mental prayer can be understood in many and diverse ways, for I have told thee that a holy desire is a continual prayer, in this sense that a good and holy will disposes itself with desire to the occasion actually appointed for prayer in addition to the continual prayer of holy desire, wherefore vocal prayer will be made at the appointed time by the soul who remains firm in a habitual holy will, and will sometimes be continued beyond the appointed time, according as charity commands for the salvation of the neighbor, if the soul see him to be in need, and also her own necessities according to the state in which I have placed her. Each one, according to his condition, ought to exert himself for the salvation of souls, for this exercise lies at the root of a holy will, and whatever he

may contribute, by words or deeds, towards the salvation of his neighbor, is virtually a prayer, although it does not replace prayer which one should make oneself at the appointed season, as My glorious standard-bearer Paul said, in the words, ‘*He who ceases not to work ceases not to pray.*’ It was for this reason that I told thee that prayer was made in many ways, that is, that actual prayer may be united with mental prayer if made with the affection of charity, which charity is itself continual prayer. I have now told thee how mental prayer is reached by exercise and perseverance, and by leaving vocal prayer for mental when I visit the soul. I have also spoken to thee of common prayer, that is, of vocal prayer in general, made outside of ordained times, and of the prayers of good-will, and how every exercise, whether performed, in oneself or in one’s neighbor, with good-will, is prayer. The enclosed soul should therefore spur herself on with prayer, and when she has arrived at friendly and filial love she does so. Unless the soul keep to this path, she will always remain tepid and imperfect, and will only love Me and her neighbor in proportion to the pleasure which she finds in My service.”

Of the method by which the soul separates herself from imperfect love, and attains to perfect love, friendly and filial.

“**H**IETHOD I have shown thee in many ways how the soul raises herself from imperfection and attains to perfection, which she does after she has attained to friendly and filial love. I tell thee that she arrives at perfect love by means of perseverance, barring herself into the House of Self-Knowledge, which knowledge of self requires to be seasoned with knowledge of Me, lest it bring the soul to confusion, for it would cause the soul to hate her own sensitive pleasure and the delight of her own consolations. But from this hatred, founded in humility, she will draw patience, with which she will become strong against the attacks of the devil, against the persecutions of man, and towards Me, when, for her good, I withdraw delight from her mind. And if her sensuality, through malevolence, should lift its head against reason, the judgment of conscience should rise against it, and, with hatred of it, hold out reason against it, not allowing such evil emotions to get by it. Though sometimes the soul who lives in holy hatred corrects and reproves herself, not only for those things that are against reason, but also for things that in reality come from Me, which is what My sweet servant St. Gregory meant, when he said that a holy and pure conscience made sin where there was no sin, that is, that through purity of conscience, it saw sin where there was no sin.

“Now the soul who wishes to rise above imperfection should await My Providence in the House of Self-Knowledge, with the light of faith, as did the disciples, who remained in the house in perseverance and in watching, and in humble and continual prayer, awaiting the coming of the Holy Spirit. She should remain fasting and watching, the eye of her intellect fastened on the doctrine of My Truth, and she will become humble because she will know herself in humble and continual prayer and holy and true desire.”

Of the signs by which the soul knows she has arrived at perfect love.

“**I**T NOW remains to be told thee how it can be seen that souls have arrived at perfect love. This is seen by the same sign that was given to the holy disciples after they had received the Holy Spirit, when they came forth from the house, and fearlessly announced the doctrine of My Word, My Only-begotten Son, not fearing pain, but rather glorying therein. They did not mind going before the tyrants of the world, to announce to them the truth, for the glory and praise of My Name. So the soul, who has awaited Me in self-knowledge as I have told thee, receives Me, on My return to her, with the fire of charity, in which charity, while still remaining in the house with perseverance, she conceives the virtues by affection of love, participating in My power; with which power and virtues she overrules and conquers her own sensitive passions, and through which charity she participates in the wisdom of My Son, in which she sees and knows, with the eye of her intellect, My Truth and the deceptions of spiritual self-love, that is, the imperfect love of her own consolations, as has been said, and she knows also the malice and deceit of the devil, which he practices on those souls who are bound by that imperfect love. She therefore arises, with hatred of that imperfection and with love of perfection, and, through this charity, which is of the Holy Spirit, she participates in His Will, fortifying her own to be willing to suffer pain, and, coming out of the house through My Name, she brings forth the virtues on her neighbor. Not that by coming out to bring forth the virtues, I mean that she issues out of the House of Self-Knowledge, but that, in the time of the neighbor’s necessity she loses that fear of being deprived of her own consolations, and so issues forth to give birth to those virtues which she has conceived through affection of love. The souls, who have thus come forth, have reached the fourth state, that is, from the third state, which is a perfect state, in which they taste charity and give birth to it on their neighbors, they have arrived at the fourth state, which is one of perfect union with Me. The two last-mentioned states are united, that is to say, one cannot be without the other, for there cannot be love of Me, without love of the neighbor, nor love of the neighbor without love of Me.”

How they who are imperfect desire to follow the Father alone, but they who are perfect desire to follow the Son. And of a vision, which this holy soul had, concerning diverse baptisms, and of

many other beautiful and useful things.

“**A**S I have told thee, these latter have issued forth from the house, which is a sign that they have arisen from imperfection and arrived at perfection. Open the eye of thy intellect and see them running by the Bridge of the doctrine of Christ crucified, which was their rule, way, and doctrine. They place none other before the eye of their intellect than Christ crucified, not the Father, as they do who are in imperfect love and do not wish to suffer pain, but only to have the delight which they find in Me. But they, as if drunken with love and burning with it, have gathered together and ascended the three steps, which I figured to thee as the three powers of the soul, and also the three actual steps, figured to thee as in the Body of My only Son, Christ crucified, by which steps the soul, as I told thee, ascended, first climbing to the Feet, with the feet of the soul’s affection, from thence arriving at the Side, where she found the secret of the Heart and knew the Baptism of water, which has virtue through the Blood, and where I dispose the soul to receive grace, uniting and kneading her together in the Blood. Where did the soul know of this her dignity, in being kneaded and united with the Blood of the Lamb, receiving the grace in Holy Baptism, in virtue of the Blood? In the Side, where she knew the fire of divine Charity, and so, if thou remember well, My Truth manifested to thee, when thou askest, saying: ‘Sweet and Immaculate Lamb, Thou wert dead when Thy side was opened. Why then didst Thou want to be struck and have Thy heart divided?’ And He replied to thee, telling thee that there was occasion enough for it; but the principal part of what He said I will tell thee. He said: Because My desire towards the human generation was ended, and I had finished the actual work of bearing pain and torment, and yet I had not been able to show, by finite things, because My love was infinite, how much more love I had, I wished thee to see the secret of the Heart, showing it to thee open, so that thou mightest see how much more I loved than I could show thee by finite pain. I poured from it Blood and Water, to show thee the Baptism of water, which is received in virtue of the Blood. I also showed the baptism of love in two ways: first in those who are baptized in their blood, shed for Me, which has virtue through My Blood, even if they have not been able to have Holy Baptism, and also in those who are baptized in fire, not being able to have Holy Baptism, but desiring it with the affection of love. There is no baptism of fire without the Blood, because the Blood is steeped in and kneaded with the fire of Divine charity, because, through love was It shed. There is yet another way by which the soul receives the baptism of Blood, speaking, as it were, under a figure, and this way the Divine charity provided, knowing the infirmity and fragility of man, through which he offends, not that he is obliged, through his fragility and infirmity, to commit sin unless he wish to do so; but, falling, as he will, into the guilt of mortal sin, by which he loses the grace which he drew from Holy Baptism in virtue of the Blood, it was necessary to leave a continual baptism of Blood. This the Divine charity provided in the Sacrament of Holy Confession, the soul receiving the Baptism of Blood, with contrition of heart, confessing, when able, to My ministers, who hold the keys of the Blood, sprinkling It, in absolution, upon the face of the soul. But, if the soul be unable to confess, contrition of heart is sufficient for this baptism, the hand of My clemency giving you the fruit of this precious Blood. But if you are able to confess, I wish you to do so, and if you are able to, and do not, you will be deprived of the fruit of the Blood. It is true that, in the last extremity, a man, desiring to confess and not being able to, will receive the fruit of this baptism, of which I have been speaking. But let no one be so mad as so to arrange his deeds, that, in the hope of receiving it, he puts off confessing until the last extremity of death, when he may not be able to do so. In which case, it is not at all certain that I shall not say to him, in My Divine Justice: ‘Thou didst not remember Me in the time of thy life, when thou couldest, now will I not remember thee in thy death.’”

“Thou seest then that these Baptisms, which you should all receive until the last moment, are continual, and though My works, that is the pains of the Cross were finite, the fruit of them which you receive in Baptism, through Me, are infinite. This is in virtue of the infinite Divine nature, united with the finite human nature, which human nature endures pain in Me, the Word, clothed with your humanity. But because the one nature is steeped in and united with the other, the Eternal Deity drew to Himself the pain, which I suffered with so much fire and love. And therefore can this operation be called infinite, not that My pain, neither the actuality of the body be infinite, nor the pain of the desire that I had to complete your redemption, because it was terminated and finished on the Cross, when the Soul was separated from the Body; but the fruit, which came out of the pain and desire for your salvation, is infinite, and therefore you receive it infinitely. Had it not been infinite, the whole human generation could not have been restored to grace, neither the past, the present, nor the future. This I manifested in the opening of My Side, where is found the secret of the Heart, showing that I loved more than I could show, with finite pain. I showed to thee that My love was infinite. How? By the Baptism of Blood, united with the fire of My charity, and by the general baptism, given to Christians, and to whomsoever will receive it, and by the Baptism of water, united with the Blood and the fire, wherein the soul is steeped. And, in order to show this, it was necessary for the Blood to come out of My Side. Now I have shown thee (said My Truth to thee) what thou askest of Me.”

How worldly people render glory and praise to God, whether they will or no.

“**A**ND so perfect is her vision that she sees the glory and praise of My Name, not so much in the angelic nature as in the human, for, whether worldly people will or no, they render glory and praise to My Name, not that they do so in the way

they should, loving Me above everything, but that My mercy shines in them, in that, in the abundance of My charity, I give them time, and do not order the earth to open and swallow them up on account of their sins. I even wait for them, and command the earth to give them of her fruits, the sun to give them light and warmth, and the sky to move above them. And in all things created and made for them, I use My charity and mercy, withdrawing neither on account of their sins. I even give equally to the sinner and the righteous man, and often more to the sinner than to the righteous man, because the righteous man is able to endure privation, and I take from him the goods of the world that he may the more abundantly enjoy the goods of Heaven. So that in worldly men My mercy and charity shine, and they render praise and glory to My Name, even when they persecute My servants; for they prove in them the virtues of patience and charity, causing them to suffer humbly and offer to Me their persecutions and injuries, thus turning them into My praise and glory.

“So that, whether they will or no, worldly people render to My Name praise and glory, even when they intend to do Me infamy and wrong.”

How even the devils render glory and praise to God.

“**S**INNERS, such as those of whom I have just spoken, are placed in this life in order to augment virtues in My servants, as the devils are in Hell as My justiciars and augmenters of My glory; that is, My instruments of justice towards the damned, and the augmenters of My glory in My creatures, who are wayfarers and pilgrims on their journey to reach Me, their End. They augment in them the virtues in diverse ways, exercising them with many temptations and vexations, causing them to injure one another and take one another’s property, and not for the motive of making them receive injury or be deprived of their property, but only to deprive them of charity. But in thinking to deprive My servants, they fortify them, proving in them the virtues of patience, fortitude, and perseverance. Thus they render praise and glory to My Name, and My truth is fulfilled in them, which Truth created them for the praise and glory of Me, Eternal Father, and that they might participate in My beauty. But, rebelling against Me in their pride, they fell and lost their vision of Me, wherefore they rendered not to Me glory through the affection of love, and I, Eternal Truth, have placed them as instruments to exercise My servants in virtue in this life and as justiciars to those who go, for their sins, to the pains of Purgatory. So thou seest that My truth is fulfilled in them, that is, that they render Me glory, not as citizens of life eternal, of which they are deprived by their sins, but as My justiciars, manifesting justice upon the damned, and upon those in Purgatory.”

How the soul, after she has passed through this life, sees fully the praise and glory of My Name in everything, and, though, in her the pain of desire is ended, the desire is not.

“**T**HUS in all things created, in all rational creatures, and in the devils is seen the glory and praise of My Name. Who can see it? The soul who is denuded of the body and has reached Me, her End, sees it clearly, and, in seeing, knows the truth. Seeing Me, the Eternal Father, she loves, and loving, she is satisfied. Satisfied, she knows the Truth, and her will is stayed in My Will, bound and made stable, so that in nothing can it suffer pain, because it has that which it desired to have, before the soul saw Me, namely, the glory and praise of My Name. She now, in truth, sees it completely in My saints, in the blessed spirits, and in all creatures and things, even in the devils, as I told thee. And although she also sees the injury done to Me, which before caused her sorrow, it no longer now can give her pain, but only compassion, because she loves without pain, and prays to Me continually with affection of love, that I will have mercy on the world. Pain in her is ended, but not love, as the tortured desire, which My Word, the Son, had borne from the beginning when I sent Him into the world, terminated on the Cross in His painful death, but His love—no. For had the affection of My charity, which I showed you by means of Him, been terminated and ended then, you would not be, because by love you are made, and had My love been drawn back, that is, had I not loved your being, you could not be, but My love created you, and My love possesses you, because I am one substance with My Truth, and He, the Word Incarnate with Me. Thou seest then, that the Saints and every soul in Eternal Life have desire for the salvation of souls without pain, because pain ended in their death, but not so the affection of love.

“Thus, as if drunk with the Blood of the Immaculate Lamb, and clothed in the love of the neighbor, they pass through the Narrow Gate, bathed in the Blood of Christ crucified, and they find themselves in Me, the Sea Pacific, raised from imperfection, far from satiety, and arrived at perfection, satisfied by every good.”

How after Saint Paul was drawn to the glory of the Blessed, he desired to be loosened from the body, as they do, who have reached the aforesaid third and fourth states.

“**P**AUL, then, had seen and tasted this good, when I drew him up into the third Heaven, that is into the height of the Trinity, where he tasted and knew My Truth, receiving fully the Holy Spirit, and learning the doctrine of My Truth, the Word Incarnate. The soul of Paul was clothed, through feeling and union, in Me, Eternal Father, like the blessed ones in Eternal Life, except that his soul was not separated from his body, except through this feeling and union. But it being pleasing to My

goodness to make of him a vessel of election in the abyss of Me, Eternal Trinity, I dispossessed him of Myself, because on Me can no pain fall, and I wished him to suffer for My Name; therefore I placed before him, as an object for the eyes of his intellect, Christ crucified, clothing him with the garment of His doctrine, binding and fettering him with the clemency of the Holy Spirit and inflaming him with the fire of charity. He became a vessel, disposed and reformed by My goodness, and, on being struck, made no resistance, but said: ‘*My Lord, what dost Thou wish me to do? Show me that which it is Thy pleasure for me to do, and I will do it.*’ Which I answered when I placed before him Christ crucified, clothing him with the doctrine of My charity. I illuminated him perfectly with the light of true contrition, by which he extirpated his defects, and founded him in My charity.”

How the soul who finds herself in the unitive state desires infinitely to leave the barren earthly state and unite herself to God.

“**A**ND when I depart from the soul in the aforesaid way that the body may return a little to its corporal sentiment, the soul, on account of the union which she had made with Me, is impatient in her life, being deprived of union with Me, and the conversation of the Immortals, who render glory to Me, and finding herself, amid the conversation of mortals, and seeing them so miserably offending Me. This vision of My offense is the torture which such souls always have, and which, with the desire to see Me, renders their life insupportable to them. Nevertheless, as their will is not their own, but becomes one with Mine, they cannot desire other than what I desire, and though they desire to come and be with Me, they are contented to remain, if I desire them to remain, with their pain, for the greater praise and glory of My Name and the salvation of souls. So that in nothing are they in discord with My Will; but they run their course with ecstatic desire, clothed in Christ crucified, and keeping by the Bridge of His doctrine, glorying in His shame and pains. Inasmuch as they appear to be suffering they are rejoicing, because the enduring of many tribulations is to them a relief in the desire which they have for death, for oftentimes the desire and the will to suffer pain mitigates the pain caused them by their desire to quit the body. These not only endure with patience, as I told thee they did, who are in the third state, but they glory, through My Name, in bearing much tribulation. In bearing tribulation they find pleasure, and not having it they suffer pain, fearing that I reward not their well-doing or that the sacrifice of their desires is not pleasing to Me; but when I permit to them many tribulations they rejoice, seeing themselves clothed with the suffering and shame of Christ crucified. Wherefore were it possible for them to have virtue without toil they would not want it. They would rather delight in the Cross, with Christ, acquiring it with pain, than in any other way obtain Eternal Life. Why? Because they are inflamed and steeped in the Blood, where they find the blaze of My charity, which charity is a fire proceeding from Me, ravishing their heart and mind and making their sacrifices acceptable. Wherefore, the eye of the intellect is lifted up and gazes into My Deity, when the affection behind the intellect is nourished and united with Me. This is a sight which I grant to the soul, infused with grace, who, in truth, loves and serves Me.”

How they, who are arrived at the aforesaid unitive state, have the eye of their intellect illuminated by supernatural light infused by grace. And how it is better to go for counsel for the salvation of the soul, to a humble and holy conscience than to a proud lettered man.

“**W**ITH this light that is given to the eye of the intellect, Thomas Aquinas saw Me, wherefore he acquired the light of much science; also Augustine, Jerome, and the Doctors, and My Saints. They were illuminated by My truth to know and understand My truth in darkness. By My truth I mean the Holy Scriptures, which seemed dark because they were not understood; not through any defect of the Scriptures, but of them who heard them, and did not understand them. Wherefore I sent this light to illuminate the blind and coarse understanding, uplifting the eye of the intellect to know the Truth. And I, Fire, Acceptor of sacrifices, ravishing away from them their darkness, give the light; not a natural light, but a supernatural, so that, though in darkness, they know the Truth. Wherefore that, which at first appeared to be dark, now appears with the most perfect light, to the gross or subtle mind; and every one receives according as he is capable or disposed to know Me, for I do not despise dispositions. So thou seest that the eye of the intellect has received supernatural light, infused by grace, by which the Doctors and Saints knew light in darkness, and of darkness made light. The intellect was, before the Scriptures were formed, wherefore, from the intellect came science, because in seeing they discerned. It was thus that the holy Prophets and Fathers understood, who prophesied of the coming and death of My Son, and the Apostles, after the coming of the Holy Spirit, which gave them that supernatural light. The Evangelists, Doctors, Professors [Confessors], Virgins, and Martyrs were all likewise illuminated by the aforesaid perfect light. And every one has had the illumination of this light according as he needed it for his salvation or that of others, or for the exposition of the Scriptures. The Doctors of the holy science had it, expounding the doctrine of My Truth, the preaching of the Apostles, and the Gospels of the Evangelists. The martyrs had it, declaring in their blood the Most Holy Faith, the fruit and the treasure of the Blood of the Lamb. The virgins had it in the affection of charity and purity. To the obedient ones is declared, by it, the obedience of the Word, showing them the perfection of obedience, which

shines in my Truth, who for the obedience that I imposed upon Him, ran to the opprobrious death of the Cross. This light is to be seen in the Old and New Testament; in the Old, by it, were seen by the eye of the intellect, and known the prophecies of the holy Prophets. In the New Testament of the evangelical life, how is the Gospel declared to the faithful? By this same light. And because the New Testament proceeded from the same light, the New Law did not break the Old Law; rather are the two Laws bound together, the imperfection of the Old Law, founded in fear alone, being taken from it, by the coming of the Word of My Only-begotten Son, with the law of Love, completing the Old Law by giving it love, and replacing the fear of penalty by holy fear. And, therefore, said My Truth to the disciples, to show that He was not a breaker of laws: '*I came not to dissolve the law, but to fulfill it.*' It is almost as if My Truth would say to them—The Law is now imperfect, but with My Blood I will make it perfect, and I will fill it up with what it lacks, taking away the fear of penalty, and founding it in love and holy fear. How was this declared to be the Truth? By this same supernatural light, which was and is given by grace to all who will receive it. Every light that comes from Holy Scripture comes and came from this supernatural light. Ignorant and proud men of science were blind notwithstanding this light, because their pride and the cloud of self-love had covered up and put out the light. Wherefore they understood the Holy Scripture rather literally than with understanding, and taste only the letter of it, still desiring many other books; and they get not to the marrow of it, because they have deprived themselves of the light, with which is found and expounded the Scripture; and they are annoyed and murmur, because they find much in it that appears to them gross and idiotic. And, nevertheless, they appear to be much illuminated in their knowledge of Scripture, as if they had studied it for long; and this is not remarkable, because they have of course the natural light from whence proceeds science. But because they have lost the supernatural light, infused by grace, they neither see nor know My Goodness, nor the grace of My servants. Wherefore, I say to thee, that it is much better to go for counsel for the salvation of the soul, to a holy and upright conscience, than to a proud lettered man, learned in much science, because such a one can only offer what he has himself, and, because of his darkness, it may appear to thee, that, from what he says, the Scriptures offer darkness. The contrary wilt thou find with My servants, because they offer the light that is in them, with hunger and desire for the soul's salvation. This I have told thee, my sweetest daughter, that thou mightest know the perfection of this unitive state, when the eye of the intellect is ravished by the fire of My charity, in which charity it receives the supernatural light. With this light the souls in the unitive state love Me, because love follows the intellect, and the more it knows the more can it love. Thus the one feeds the other, and, with this light, they both arrive at the Eternal Vision of Me, where they see and taste Me, in Truth, the soul being separated from the body, as I told thee when I spoke to thee of the blissfulness that the soul received in Me. This state is most excellent, when the soul, being yet in the mortal body, tastes bliss with the immortals, and oft-times she arrives at so great a union that she scarcely knows whether she be in the body or out of it; and tastes the earnest-money of Eternal Life, both because she is united with Me, and because her will is dead in Christ, by which death her union was made with Me, and in no other way could she perfectly have done so. Therefore do they taste life eternal, deprived of the hell of their own will, which gives to man the earnest-money of damnation, if he yield to it."

How this devout soul seeks knowledge from God concerning the state and fruit of tears.

THEN this soul, yearning with very great desire, and rising as one intoxicated both by the union which she had had with God, and by what she had heard and tasted of the Supreme and Sweet Truth, yearned with grief over the ignorance of creatures, in that they did not know their Benefactor, or the affection of the love of God. And nevertheless she had joy from the hope of the promise that the Truth of God had made to her, teaching her the way she was to direct her will (and the other servants of God as well as herself) in order that He should do mercy to the world. And, lifting up the eye of her intellect upon the sweet Truth, to whom she remained united, wishing to know somewhat of the aforesaid states of the soul of which God had spoken to her, and seeing that the soul passes through these states with tears, she wished to learn from the Truth concerning the different kinds of tears, and how they came to be, and whence they proceeded, and the fruit that resulted from weeping. Wishing then to know this from the Sweet, Supreme and First Truth, as to the manner of being and reason of the aforesaid tears, and inasmuch as the truth cannot be learnt from any other than from the Truth Himself, and nothing can be learnt in the Truth but what is seen by the eye of the intellect, she made her request of the Truth. For it is necessary for him who is lifted with desire to learn the Truth with the light of faith.

Wherefore, knowing that she had not forgotten the teaching which the Truth, that is, God, had given her, that in no other way could she learn about the different states and fruits of tears, she rose out of herself, exceeding every limit of her nature with the greatness of her desire. And, with the light of a lively faith, she opened the eye of her intellect upon the Eternal Truth, in whom she saw and knew the Truth, in the matter of her request, for God Himself manifested it to her, and condescending in His benignity to her burning desire, fulfilled her petition.

How there are five kinds of tears.

THEN said the Supreme and Sweet Truth of God, "Oh, beloved and dearest daughter, thou beggest knowledge of the reasons and fruits of tears, and I have not despised thy desire. Open well the eye of thy intellect and I will show thee, among the aforesaid states of the soul, of which I have told thee, concerning the imperfect tears caused by fear; but first rather of the tears of wicked men of the world. These are the tears of damnation. The former are those of fear, and belong to men who abandon sin from fear of punishment, and weep for fear. The third are the tears of those who, having abandoned sin, are beginning to serve and taste Me, and weep for very sweetness; but since their love is imperfect, so also is their weeping, as I have told thee. The fourth are the tears of those who have arrived at the perfect love of their neighbor, loving Me without any regard whatsoever for themselves. These weep and their weeping is perfect. The fifth are joined to the fourth and are tears of sweetness let fall with great peace, as I will explain to thee. I will tell thee also of the tears of fire, without bodily tears of the eyes, which satisfy those who often would desire to weep and cannot. And I wish thee to know that all these various graces may exist in one soul, who, rising from fear and imperfect love, reaches perfect love in the unitive state. Now I will begin to tell thee of these tears in the following way."

Of the difference of these tears, arising from the explanation of the aforesaid state of the soul.

"I WISH thee to know that every tear proceeds from the heart, for there is no member of the body that will satisfy the heart so much as the eye. If the heart is in pain the eye manifests it. And if the pain be sensual the eye drops hearty tears which engender death, because proceeding from the heart, they are caused by a disordinate love distinct from the love of Me; for such love, being disordinate and an offense to Me, receives the meed of mortal pain and tears. It is true that their guilt and grief are more or less heavy, according to the measure of their disordinate love. And these form that first class, who have the tears of death, of whom I have spoken to thee, and will speak again. Now, begin to consider the tears which give the commencement of life, the tears, that is, of those who, knowing their guilt, set to weeping for fear of the penalty they have incurred.

"These are both hearty and sensual tears, because the soul, not having yet arrived at perfect hatred of its guilt on account of the offense thereby done to Me, abandons it with a hearty grief for the penalty which follows the sin committed, while the eye weeps in order to satisfy the grief of the heart.

"But the soul, exercising herself in virtue, begins to lose her fear, knowing that fear alone is not sufficient to give her Eternal Life, as I have already told thee when speaking of the second stage of the soul. And so she proceeds, with love, to know herself and My goodness in her, and begins to take hope in My mercy in which her heart feels joy. Sorrow for her grief, mingled with the joy of her hope in My mercy, causes her eye to weep, which tears issue from the very fountain of her heart.

"But, inasmuch as she has not yet arrived at great perfection, she often drops sensual tears, and if thou askest Me why, I reply: Because the root of self-love is not sensual love, for that has already been removed, as has been said, but it is a spiritual love with which the soul desires spiritual consolations or loves some creature spiritually. (I have spoken to thee at length regarding the imperfections of such souls.) Wherefore, when such a soul is deprived of the thing she loves, that is, internal or external consolation, the internal being the consolation received from Me, the external being that which she had from the creature, and when temptations and the persecutions of men come on her, her heart is full of grief. And, as soon as the eye feels the grief and suffering of the heart, she begins to weep with a tender and compassionate sorrow, pitying herself with the spiritual compassion of self-love; for her self-will is not yet crushed and destroyed in everything, and in this way she lets fall sensual tears—tears, that is, of spiritual passion. But, growing, and exercising herself in the light of self-knowledge, she conceives displeasure at herself and finally perfect self-hatred. From this she draws true knowledge of My goodness with a fire of love, and she begins to unite herself to Me, and to conform her will to Mine and so to feel joy and compassion. Joy in herself through the affection of love, and compassion for her neighbor, as I told thee in speaking of the third stage. Immediately her eye, wishing to satisfy the heart, cries with hearty love for Me and for her neighbor, grieving solely for My offense and her neighbor's loss, and not for any penalty or loss due to herself; for she does not think of herself, but only of rendering glory and praise to My Name, and, in an ecstasy of desire, she joyfully takes the food prepared for her on the table of the Holy Cross, thus conforming herself to the humble, patient, and immaculate Lamb, My Only-begotten Son, of whom I made a Bridge, as I have said. Having thus sweetly travelled by that Bridge, following the doctrine of My sweet Truth, enduring with true and sweet patience every pain and trouble which I have permitted to be inflicted upon her for her salvation, having manfully received them all, not choosing them according to her own tastes, but accepting them according to Mine, and not only, as I said, enduring them with patience, but sustaining them with joy, she counts it glory to be persecuted for My Name's sake in whatever she may have to suffer. Then the soul arrives at such delight and tranquillity of mind that no tongue can tell it. Having crossed the river by means of the Eternal Word, that is, by the doctrine of My Only-begotten Son, and, having fixed the eye of her intellect on Me, the sweet Supreme Truth, having seen the Truth, knows it; and knowing it, loves it. Drawing her affection after her intellect, she tastes My Eternal Deity, and she knows and sees the Divine nature united to your humanity.

"Then she reposes in Me, the Sea Pacific, and her heart is united to Me in love, as I told thee when speaking of the fourth and unitive state. When she thus feels Me, the Eternal Deity, her eyes let fall tears of sweetness, tears indeed of milk,

nourishing the soul in true patience; an odoriferous ointment are these tears, shedding odors of great sweetness.

"Oh, best beloved daughter, how glorious is that soul who has indeed been able to pass from the stormy ocean to Me, the Sea Pacific, and in that Sea, which is Myself, the Supreme and Eternal Deity, to fill the pitcher of her heart. And her eye, the conduit of her heart, endeavors to satisfy her heart-pangs, and so sheds tears. This is the last stage in which the soul is blessed and sorrowful.

"Blessed she is through the union which she feels herself to have with Me, tasting the divine love; sorrowful through the offenses which she sees done to My goodness and greatness, for she has seen and tasted the bitterness of this in her self-knowledge, by which self-knowledge, together with her knowledge of Me, she arrived at the final stage. Yet this sorrow is no impediment to the unitive state, which produces tears of great sweetness through self-knowledge, gained in love of the neighbor, in which exercise the soul discovers the plaint of My divine mercy, and grief at the offenses caused to her neighbor, weeping with those who weep, and rejoicing with those who rejoice—that is, who live in My love. Over these the soul rejoices, seeing glory and praise rendered Me by My servants, so that the third kind of grief does not prevent the fourth, that is, the final grief belonging to the unitive state; they rather give savor to each other, for, had not this last grief (in which the soul finds such union with Me), developed from the grief belonging to the third state of neighborly love, it would not be perfect. Therefore it is necessary that the one should flavor the other, else the soul would come to a state of presumption, induced by the subtle breeze of love of her own reputation, and would fall at once, vomited from the heights to the depths. Therefore it is necessary to bear with others and practice continually love to one's neighbor, together with true knowledge of oneself.

"In this way will she feel the fire of My love in herself, because love of her neighbor is developed out of love of Me—that is, out of that learning which the soul obtained by knowing herself and My goodness in her. When, therefore, she sees herself to be ineffably loved by Me, she loves every rational creature with the self-same love with which she sees herself to be loved. And, for this reason, the soul that knows Me immediately expands to the love of her neighbor, because she sees that I love that neighbor ineffably, and so, herself, loves the object which she sees Me to have loved still more. She further knows that she can be of no use to Me and can in no way repay Me that pure love with which she feels herself to be loved by Me, and therefore endeavors to repay it through the medium which I have given her, namely, her neighbor, who is the medium through which you can all serve Me. For, as I have said to thee, you can perform all virtues by means of your neighbor, I having given you all creatures, in general and in particular, according to the diverse graces each has received from Me, to be ministered unto by you; you should therefore love them with the same pure love with which I have loved you. That pure love cannot be returned directly to Me, because I have loved you without being Myself loved, and without any consideration of Myself whatsoever, for I loved you without being loved by you—before you existed; it was, indeed, love that moved Me to create you to My own image and likeness. This love you cannot repay to Me, but you can pay it to My rational creature, loving your neighbor without being loved by him and without consideration of your own advantage, whether spiritual or temporal, but loving him solely for the praise and glory of My Name, because he has been loved by Me.

"Thus will you fulfill the commandment of the law, to love Me above everything, and your neighbor as yourselves.

"True indeed is it that this height cannot be reached without passing through the second stage, namely the second stage of union which becomes the third (and final) stage. Nor can it be preserved when it has been reached if the soul abandon the affection from which it has been developed, the affection to which the second class of tears belongs. It is therefore impossible to fulfill the law given by Me, the Eternal God, without fulfilling that of your neighbor, for these two laws are the feet of your affection by which the precepts and counsels are observed, which were given you, as I have told thee, by My Truth, Christ crucified. These two states united nourish your soul in virtue, making her to grow in the perfection of virtue and in the unitive state. Not that the other state is changed because this further state has been reached, for this further state does but increase the riches of grace in new and various gifts and admirable elevations of the mind, in the knowledge of the truth, as I said to thee, which, though it is mortal, appears immortal because the soul's perception of her own sensuality is mortified and her will is dead through the union which she has attained with Me.

"Oh, how sweet is the taste of this union to the soul, for, in tasting it, she sees My secrets! Wherefore she often receives the spirit of prophecy, knowing the things of the future. This is the effect of My Goodness, but the humble soul should despise such things, not indeed insofar as they are given her by My love, but insofar as she desires them by reason of her appetite for consolation, considering herself unworthy of peace and quiet of mind, in order to nourish virtue within her soul. In such a case let her not remain in the second stage, but return to the valley of self-knowledge. I give her this light, My grace permitting, so that she may ever grow in virtue. For the soul is never so perfect in this life that she cannot attain to a higher perfection of love. My Only-begotten Son, your Captain, was the only One who could increase in no perfection, because He was one substance with Me, and I with Him, wherefore His soul was blessed through union with the Divine nature. But do ye, His pilgrim-members, be ever ready to grow in greater perfection, not indeed to another stage, for as I have said, ye have now reached the last, but to that further grade of perfection in the last stage, which may please you by means of My grace."

How the four stages of the soul, to which belong the five aforesaid states of tears, produce tears of infinite value: and how God wishes to be served as the Infinite, and not as anything finite.

“THESE five states are like five principal canals which are filled with abundant tears of infinite value, all of which give life if they are disciplined in virtue, as I have said to thee. Thou askest how their value can be infinite. I do not say that in this life your tears can become infinite, but I call them infinite, on account of the infinite desire of your soul from which they proceed. I have already told thee how tears come from the heart, and how the heart distributes them to the eye, having gathered them in its own fiery desire. As, when green wood is on the fire, the moisture it contains groans on account of the heat, because the wood is green, so does the heart, made green again by the renovation of grace drawn into itself among its self-love which dries up the soul, so that fiery desire and tears are united. And inasmuch as desire is never ended, it is never satisfied in this life, but the more the soul loves the less she seems to herself to love. Thus is holy desire, which is founded in love, exercised, and with this desire the eye weeps. But when the soul is separated from the body and has reached Me, her End, she does not on that account abandon desire, so as to no longer yearn for Me or love her neighbor, for love has entered into her like a woman bearing the fruits of all other virtues. It is true that suffering is over and ended, as I have said to thee, for the soul that desires Me possesses Me in very truth, without any fear of ever losing that which she has so long desired; but, in this way, hunger is kept up, because those who are hungry are satisfied, and as soon as they are satisfied hunger again; in this way their satiety is without disgust, and their hunger without suffering, for, in Me, no perfection is wanting.

“Thus is your desire infinite, otherwise it would be worth nothing, nor would any virtue of yours have any life if you served Me with anything finite. For I, who am the Infinite God, wish to be served by you with infinite service, and the only infinite thing you possess is the affection and desire of your souls. In this sense I said that there were tears of infinite value, and this is true as regards their mode, of which I have spoken, namely, of the infinite desire which is united to the tears. When the soul leaves the body the tears remain behind, but the affection of love has drawn to itself the fruit of the tears, and consumed it, as happens in the case of the water in your furnace. The water has not really been taken out of the furnace, but the heat of the fire has consumed it and drawn it into itself. Thus the soul, having arrived at tasting the fire of My divine charity, and having passed from this life in a state of love towards Me and her neighbor, having further possessed that unitive love which caused her tears to fall, does not cease to offer Me her blessed desires, tearful indeed, though without pain or physical weeping, for physical tears have evaporated in the furnace, becoming tears of fire of the Holy Spirit. Thou seest then how tears are infinite, how, as regards the tears shed in this life only, no tongue can tell what different sorrows may cause them. I have now told thee the difference between four of these states of tears.”

Of the fruit of worldly men's tears.

“IT remains for Me to tell thee of the fruit produced by tears shed with desire, and received into the soul. But first will I speak to thee of that first class of men whom I mentioned at the beginning of this My discourse; those, that is, who live miserably in the world, making a god of created things and of their own sensuality, from which comes damage to their body and soul. I said to thee that every tear proceeded from the heart, and this is the truth, for the heart grieves in proportion to the love it feels. So worldly men weep when their heart feels pain, that is, when they are deprived of something which they loved.

“But many and diverse are their complainings. Dost thou know how many? There are as many as there exist different loves. And inasmuch as the root of self-love is corrupt, everything that grows from it is corrupt also. Self-love is a tree on which grows nothing but fruits of death, putrid flowers, stained leaves, branches bowed down, and struck by various winds. This is the tree of the soul. For you are all trees of love, and without love you cannot live, for you have been made by Me for love. The soul who lives virtuously, places the root of her tree in the valley of true humility; but those who live thus miserably are planted on the mountain of pride, whence it follows that since the root of the tree is badly planted, the tree can bear no fruits of life but only of death. Their fruits are their actions, which are all poisoned by many and diverse kinds of sin, and if they should produce some good fruit among their actions, even it will be spoilt by the foulness of its root, for no good actions done by a soul in mortal sin are of value for eternal life, for they are not done in grace. Let not, however, such a soul abandon on this account its good works, for every good deed is rewarded, and every evil deed punished. A good action performed out of a state of grace is not sufficient to merit Eternal Life, as has been said, but My justice, My divine goodness, grants an incomplete reward, imperfect as the action which obtains it. Often such a man is rewarded in temporal matters; sometimes I give him more time in which to repent, as I have already said to thee in another place. This also will I sometimes do, I grant him the life of grace by means of My servants who are pleasing and acceptable to Me. I acted in this way with My glorious

Apostle Paul, who abandoned his infidelity, and the persecutions he directed against the Christians, at the prayer of St. Stephen. See truly, therefore, that, in whatever state a man may be, he should never stop doing good.

“I said to thee that the flowers of this tree were putrid, and so in truth they are. Its flowers are the stinking thoughts of the heart, displeasing to Me, and full of hatred and unkindness towards their neighbor. So if a man be a thief, he robs Me of honor, and takes it himself. This flower stinks less than that of false judgment, which is of two kinds. The first with regard to Me, by which men judge My secret judgments, gauging falsely all My mysteries, that is, judging that which I did in love, to have been done in hatred; that which I did in truth to have been done in falsehood; that which I give them for life, to have been given them for death. They condemn and judge everything according to their weak intellect; for they have blinded the eye of their intellect

with sensual self-love, and hidden the pupil of the most holy Faith, which they will not allow to see or know the Truth. The second kind of false judgment is directed against a man's neighbor, from which often come many evils, because the wretched man wishes to set himself up as the judge of the affections and heart of other rational creatures, when he does not yet know himself. And, for an action which he may see, or for a word he may hear, he will judge the affection of the heart. My servants always judge well, because they are founded on Me, the Supreme Good; but such as these always judge badly, for they are founded on evil. Such critics as these cause hatreds, murders, unhappinesses of all kinds to their neighbors, and remove themselves far away from the love of My servants' virtue.

"Truly these fruits follow the leaves, which are the words which issue from their mouth in insult to Me and the Blood of My Only-begotten Son, and in hatred to their neighbors. And they think of nothing else but cursing and condemning My works, and blaspheming and saying evil of every rational creature, according as their judgment may suggest to them. The unfortunate creatures do not remember that the tongue is made only to give honor to Me, and to confess sins, and to be used in love of virtue, and for the salvation of the neighbor. These are the stained leaves of that most miserable fault, because the heart from which they proceeded was not clean, but all spotted with duplicity and misery. How much danger, apart from the spiritual privation of grace to the soul, of temporal loss may not occur! For you have all heard and seen how, through words alone, have come revolutions of states, and destructions of cities, and many homicides and other evils, a word having entered the heart of the listener, and having passed through a space not large enough for a knife.

"I say that this tree has seven branches drooping to the earth, on which grow the flowers and leaves in the way I have told you. These branches are the seven mortal sins which are full of many and diverse wickednesses, contained in the roots and trunk of self-love and of pride, which first made both branches and flowers of many thoughts, the leaves of words, and the fruits of wicked deeds. They stand drooping to the earth because the branches of mortal sin can turn no other way than to the earth, the fragile disordinate substance of the world. Do not marvel, they can turn no way but that in which they can be fed by the earth; for their hunger is insatiable, and the earth is unable to satisfy them. They are insatiable and unbearable to themselves, and it is conformable to their state that they should always be unquiet, longing and desiring that thing which they have to satiety. This is the reason why such satiety cannot content them, because they (who are infinite in their being) are always desiring something finite; because their being will never end, though their life to grace ends when they commit mortal sin.

"Man is placed above all creatures, and not beneath them, and he cannot be satisfied or content except in something greater than himself. Greater than himself there is nothing but Myself, the Eternal God. Therefore I alone can satisfy him, and, because he is deprived of this satisfaction by his guilt, he remains in continual torment and pain. Weeping follows pain, and when he begins to weep the wind strikes the tree of self-love, which he has made the principle of all his being."

*How this devout soul, thanking God for His explanation of the above-mentioned states of tears,
makes three petitions.*

THEN this soul, eager with the greatness of her desire, through the sweetness of the explanation and satisfaction which she had received from the Truth, concerning the state of tears, said as one enamored—"Thanks, thanks be to Thee, Supreme and Eternal Father, Satisfier of holy desires, and Lover of our Salvation, who, through Thy love, didst give us Love Himself, in the time of our warfare with Thee, in the person of Thy Only-begotten Son. By this abyss of Thy fiery Love, I beg of Thee grace and mercy that I may come to Thee truly in the light, and not flee far in darkness away from Thy doctrine, of which Thou hast clearly demonstrated to me the truth, so that, by the light thereof, I perceive two other points, concerning which I fear that they are, or may become, stumbling-blocks to me. I beg, Eternal Father, that, before I leave the subject of these states of tears, Thou wouldst explain these points also to me. The first is—when a person desirous of serving Thee, comes to me, or to some other servant of Thine to ask for counsel, how should I teach him? I know, Sweet and Eternal God, that Thou didst reply above to this question—'I am He who takes delight in few words and many deeds.' Nevertheless, if it please Thy goodness to grant me a few more words on the subject, it will cause me the greatest pleasure. And also, if on some occasion, when I am praying for Thy creatures, and in particular for Thy servants, and I seem to see the subjects of my prayer, in one I find (in the course of my prayer) a well-disposed mind, a soul rejoicing in Thee; and in another, as it might seem to me, a mind full of darkness; have I the right, O Eternal Father, to judge the one soul to be in light, and the other in darkness? Or, supposing I should see that the one lives in great penance, and the other does not, should I be right to judge that he who does the greater penance has the higher perfection? I pray Thee, so that I may not be deceived through my limited vision, that Thou wouldst declare to me in detail, what Thou hast already said in general on this matter. The second request I have to make is, that Thou wilt explain further to me about the sign which Thou didst say the soul received on being visited by Thee—the sign which revealed Thy Presence. If I remember well, oh, Eternal Truth, Thou didst say that the soul remained in joy and courageous virtue. I would fain know whether this joy can consist with the delusion of the passion of spiritual self-love; for if it were so, I would humbly confine myself to the sign of virtue. These are the things which I beg Thee to tell me, so that I may serve Thee and my neighbor in truth, and not fall into false judgment concerning Thy creatures and servants. For it seems to me that the habit of judging keeps the

soul far from Thee, so I do not wish to fall into this snare."

How the light of reason is necessary to every soul that wishes to serve God in truth; and first of the light of reason in general.

THEN the Eternal God, delighting in the thirst and hunger of that soul, and in the purity of her heart, and the desire with which she longed to serve Him, turned the eye of His benignity and mercy upon her, saying—"Oh, best-beloved, dearest and sweetest daughter, my spouse! rise out of thyself, and open the eye of thy intellect to see Me, the Infinite Goodness, and the ineffable love which I have towards thee and My other servants. And open the ear of the desire which thou feelest towards Me, and remember, that if thou dost not see, thou canst not hear, that is to say, that the soul that does not see into My Truth with the eye of her intellect, cannot hear or know My Truth, wherefore in order that thou mayest the better know it, rise above the feelings of thy senses.

"And I, who take delight in thy request, will satisfy thy demand. Not that thou canst increase My delight, for I am the cause of thee and of thy increase; not those of Mine. Yet the very pleasure that I take in the work of My own hands causes Me delight."

Then that soul obeyed and rose out of herself, in order to learn the true solution of her difficulty. And the Eternal God said to her, "In order that thou mayest the better understand what I shall say to thee, I shall revert to the beginning of thy request concerning the three lights which issue from Me, the True Light. The first is a general light dwelling in those who live in ordinary charity. (I shall repeat to thee here many things concerning these lights, which I have already told thee, in spite of My having done so, in order that thy creeping intelligence may better understand that which thou wishest to know.) The other two lights dwell in those who, having abandoned the world, desire perfection. Besides this I will explain to thee thy request, telling thee in great detail that which I have already pointed out to thee in general. Thou knowest, as I have told thee, that, without the light, no one can walk in the truth, that is, without the light of reason, which light of reason you draw from Me the True Light, by means of the eye of thy intellect and the light of faith which I have given you in holy Baptism, though you may have lost it by your own defects. For, in Baptism, and through the mediation of the Blood of My Only-begotten Son, you have received the form of faith; which faith you exercise in virtue by the light of reason, which gives you life and causes you to walk in the path of truth, and, by its means, to arrive at Me, the True Light, for, without it, you would plunge into darkness.

"It is necessary for you to have two lights derived from this primary light, and to these two I will also add a third. The first lightens you all to know the transitory nature of the things of the world, all of which pass like the wind. But this you cannot know thoroughly, unless you first recognize your own fragility, how strong is your inclination, through the law of perversity with which your members are bound, to rebel against Me, your Creator (not that by this law any man can be constrained to commit any, even the smallest sin, against his will, but that this law of perversity fights lustily against the spirit). I did not impose this law upon you, in order that My rational creature should be conquered by it, but in order that he should prove and increase the virtue of his soul, because virtue cannot be proved, except by its contrary. Sensuality is contrary to the spirit, and yet, by means of sensuality, the soul is able to prove the love which she has for Me, her Creator. How does she prove it? When, with anger and displeasure, she rises against herself. This law has also been imposed in order to preserve the soul in true humility. Wherefore thou seest that, while I created the soul to Mine own image and likeness, placing her in such dignity and beauty, I caused her to be accompanied by the vilest of all things, imposing on her the law of perversity, imprisoning her in a body, formed of the vilest substance of the earth, so that, seeing in what her true beauty consisted, she should not raise her head in pride against Me. Wherefore, to one who possesses this light, the fragility of his body is a cause of humiliation to the soul, and is in no way matter for pride, but rather for true and perfect humility. So that this law does not constrain you to any sin by its strivings, but supplies a reason to make you know yourselves and the instability of the world. This should be seen by the eye of the intellect, with light of the Holy Faith, of which I said to thee that it was the pupil of the eye. This is that light which is necessary in general to every rational creature, whatever may be his condition, who wishes to participate in the life of grace, in the fruit of the Blood of the immaculate Lamb. This is the ordinary light, that is, the light which all persons must possess, as has been said, for, without it, the soul would be in a state of damnation. And, for this reason, because the soul, being without the light, is not in a state of grace, inasmuch as, not having the light, she does not know the evil of her sin or its cause, and therefore cannot avoid or hate it.

"And similarly if the soul know not good, and the reason of good, that is to say virtue, she cannot love or desire either Me, who am the Essential Good, or virtue, which I have given you as an instrument and means for you to receive My grace, and Myself the True Good. See then how necessary is this light, for your sins consist in nothing else than in loving that which I hate, and in hating that which I love. I love virtue and hate vice; he who loves vice and hates virtue offends Me, and is deprived of My grace. Such a one walks as if blind, for he knows not the cause of vice, that is, his sensual self-love, nor does he hate himself on account of it; he is ignorant of vice and of the evil which follows it: he is ignorant of virtue and of Me, who am the cause of his obtaining life-giving virtue; he is ignorant of his own dignity, which he should maintain by advancing to grace, by means of virtue. See, therefore, how his ignorance is the cause of all his evil, and how thou also needest this light, as has been

said."

Of those who have placed their desire rather in the mortification of the body than in the destruction of their own will; and of the second light, more perfect than the former general one.

"WHEN the soul has arrived at the attainment of the general light, of which I have spoken, she should not remain contented, because, as long as you are pilgrims in this life, you are capable of growth, and he who does not go forward, by that very fact, is turning back. She should either grow in the general light, which she has acquired through My grace, or anxiously strive to attain to the second and perfect light, leaving the imperfect and reaching the perfect. For, if the soul truly have light, she will wish to arrive at perfection. In this second perfect light are to be found two kinds of perfection; for they may be called perfect who have abandoned the general way of living of the world. One perfection is that of those who give themselves up wholly to the castigation of the body, doing great and severe penance. These, in order that their sensuality may not rebel against their reason, have placed their desire rather in the mortification of the body than in the destruction of their self-will, as I have explained to thee in another place. These feed their souls at the table of penance, and are good and perfect, if their penance be illuminated by discretion, and founded on Me, if, that is to say, they act with true knowledge of themselves and of Me, with great humility, and wholly conformed to the judgment of My Will, and not to that of the will of man. But, if they were not thus clothed with My Will, in true humility, they would often offend against their own perfection, esteeming themselves the judges of those who do not walk in the same path. Knowest thou why this would happen to them? Because they have placed all their labor and desire in the mortification of the body, rather than in the destruction of their own will. Such as these wish always to choose their own times, and places, and consolations, after their own fashion, and also the persecutions of the world and of the devil, as I have narrated to thee in speaking of the second state of perfection.

"They say, cheating themselves with the delusion of their own self-will, which I have already called their spiritual self-will, 'I wish to have that consolation, and not these battles, or these temptations of the devil, not, indeed, for my own pleasure, but in order to please God the more, and in order to retain Him the more in my soul through grace; because it seems to me that I should possess Him more, and serve Him better in that way than in this.' And this is the way the soul often falls into trouble, and becomes tedious and insupportable to herself; thus injuring her own perfection; yet she does not perceive it, nor that, within her, lurks the stench of pride, and there she lies. Now, if the soul were not in this condition, but were truly humble and not presumptuous, she would be illuminated to see that I, the primary and sweet Truth, grant condition, and time, and place, and consolations, and tribulations as they may be needed for your salvation, and to complete the perfection to which I have elected the soul. And she would see that I give everything through love, and that therefore, with love and reverence, should she receive everything, which is what the souls in the second state do, and, by doing so, arrive at the third state. Of whom I will now speak to thee, explaining to thee the nature of these two states which stand in the most perfect light."

Of the third and most perfect state, and of reason, and of the works done by the soul who has arrived at this light. And of a beautiful vision which this devout soul once received, in which the method of arriving at perfect purity is fully treated, and the means to avoid judging our neighbor is spoken of.

"THOSE who belong to the third state, which immediately follows the last, having arrived at this glorious light, are perfect in every condition in which they may be, and receive every event which I permit to happen to them with due reverence, as I have mentioned to thee when speaking of the third and unitive state of the soul. These deem themselves worthy of the troubles and stumbling-blocks caused them by the world, and of the privation of their own consolation, and indeed of whatever circumstance happens to them. And inasmuch as they deem themselves worthy of trouble, so also do they deem themselves unworthy of the fruit which they receive after their trouble. They have known and tasted in the light My Eternal Will, which wishes naught else but your good, and gives and permits these troubles in order that you should be sanctified in Me. Wherefore the soul having known My Will, clothes herself with it, and fixes her attention on nothing else except seeing in what way she can preserve and increase her perfection to the glory and praise of My Name, opening the eye of her intellect and fixing it in the light of faith upon Christ crucified, My Only-begotten Son, loving and following His doctrine, which is the rule of the road for perfect and imperfect alike. And see, how My Truth, the Lamb, who became enamored of her when He saw her, gives the soul the doctrine of perfection. She knows what this perfection is, having seen it practiced by the sweet and amorous Word, My Only-begotten Son, who was fed at the table of holy desire, seeking the honor of Me, the Eternal Father, and your salvation. And, inflamed with this desire, He ran, with great eagerness, to the shameful death of the Cross, and accomplished the obedience which was imposed on Him by Me, His Father, not shunning labors or insults or withdrawing on account of your ingratitude or ignorance of so great a benefit, or because of the persecutions of the Jews, or on account of the insults, derision, grumbling, and shouting of the people. But all this He passed through like the true Captain and Knight that He was, whom I had

placed on the battlefield to deliver you from the hands of the Devil, so that you might be free, and drawn out of the most terrible slavery in which you could ever be, and also to teach you His road, His doctrine, and His rule, so that you might open the Door of Me, Eternal Life, with the key of His precious Blood, shed with such fire of love, with such hatred of your sins. It was as if the sweet and amorous Word, My Son, should have said to you: ‘Behold, I have made the road, and opened the door with My Blood.’ Do not you then be negligent to follow, laying yourselves down to rest in self-love and ignorance of the road, presuming to choose to serve Me in your own way, instead of in the way which I have made straight for you by means of My Truth, the Incarnate Word, and built up with His Blood. Rise up then, promptly, and follow Him, for no one can reach Me, the Father, if not by Him; He is the Way and the Door by which you must enter into Me, the Sea Pacific.

“When therefore the soul has arrived at seeing, knowing, and tasting, in its full sweetness, this light, she runs, as one enamored and inflamed with love, to the table of holy desire; she does not see herself in herself, seeking her own consolation either spiritual or temporal, but, like one who has placed his all in this light and knowledge, and has destroyed his own will, she shuns no labor from whatever source it comes, but rather enduring the troubles, the insults, the temptations of the devil, and the murmurings of men, eats at the table of the most holy Cross, the food of the honor of Me, the Eternal God, and of the salvation of souls; seeking no reward, either from Me or from creatures, because she is stripped of mercenary love, that is, of love for Me based on interested motives, and is clothed in perfect light, loving Me in perfect purity, with no other regard than for the praise and glory of My Name, serving neither Me for her own delight, nor her neighbor for her own profit, but purely through love alone. Such as these have lost themselves, and have stripped themselves of the Old Man, that is of their own sensuality, and, having clothed themselves with the New Man, the sweet Christ Jesus, My Truth, follow Him manfully. These are they who sit at the table of holy desire, having been more anxious to slay their own will than to slay and mortify their own body. They have indeed mortified their body, though not as an end in itself, but as a means which helps them to stay their own will, as I said to thee when explaining that sentence that I wished few words and many deeds, and so ought you to do. Their principal desire should be to slay their own will, so that it may not seek or wish anything else than to follow My sweet Truth, Christ crucified, seeking the honor and glory of My Name and the salvation of souls. Those who are in this sweet light know it, and remain constantly in peace and quiet, and no one scandalizes them, for they have cut away that thing by which stumbling-blocks are caused, namely their own will. And all the persecutions, with which the world and the devil can attack them, slide under their feet, standing, as they do, in the waters of many tribulations and temptations, and do not hurt them, for they remain attached to Me by the umbilical cord of fiery desire. Such a man rejoices in everything, nor does he make himself judge of My servants, or of any rational creature, but rejoices in every condition and in every manner of holiness which he sees, saying: ‘Thanks be to Thee, Eternal Father, who hast in Thy House many mansions.’ And he rejoices more in the different ways of holiness which he sees, than if he were to see all travelling by one road, because, in this way, he perceives the greatness of My Goodness become more manifest, and thus, rejoicing, draws from all the fragrance of the rose. And not only in the case of good, but even when he sees something evidently sinful, he does not fall into judgment, but rather into true and holy compassion, interceding with Me for sinners and saying, with perfect humility: ‘Today it is thy turn, and tomorrow it will be mine unless the Divine Grace preserve me.’

“Enamor thyself, dearest daughter, of this sweet and excellent state, and gaze at those who run in this glorious light and holiness, for they have holy minds, and eat at the table of holy desire, and, with the light, have arrived at feeding on the food of souls, that is, the honor of Me, the Eternal Father, being clothed with burning love in the sweet garment of My Lamb, My Only-begotten Son, namely His doctrine. These do not lose their time in passing false judgments, either on My servants or the servants of the world, and they are never scandalized by any murmurings of men, either for their own sake or that of others. That is to say, in their own case they are content to endure anything for My Name’s sake; and when an injury is done to someone else, they endure it with compassion of this injured neighbor, and without murmuring against him who caused the injury, or him who received it, because their love is not disordinate, but has been ordered in Me, the Eternal God.

“And, since their love is so ordered, these souls, my dearest daughter, never take offense from those they love, nor from any rational creature, their will being dead and not alive, wherefore they never assume the right to judge the will of men, but only the will of My clemency. These observe the doctrine which, as thou knowest, was given thee by My Truth at the beginning of thy life, when thou wast thinking in what way thou couldst arrive at perfect purity, and wast praying to Me with a great desire of doing so. Thou knowest what was replied to thee, while thou wast asleep, concerning this holy desire, and that the words resounded not only in thy mind, but also in thine ear. So much so, that, if thou rememberest truly, thou didst return to thy waking body, when My Truth said, ‘Wilt thou arrive at perfect purity, and be freed from stumbling-blocks, so that thy mind may not be scandalized by anything?’ Unite thyself always to Me by the affection of love, for I am the Supreme and Eternal Purity. I am that Fire which purifies the soul, and the closer the soul is to Me, the purer she becomes, and the further she is from Me, the more does her purity leave her; which is the reason why men of the world fall into such iniquities, for they are separated from Me, while the soul, who, without any medium, unites herself directly to Me, participates in My purity. Another thing is necessary for thee to arrive at this union and purity, namely, that thou shouldest never judge the will of man in anything that thou mayest see done or said by any creature whatsoever, either to thyself or to others. My Will alone shouldest thou consider, both in them and in thyself. And, if thou shouldest see evident sins or defects, draw out of those thorns the rose, that is to say, offer

them to Me, with holy compassion. In the case of injuries done to thyself, judge that My Will permits this in order to prove virtue in thyself, and in My other servants, esteeming that he who acts thus does so as the instrument of My Will; perceiving, moreover, that such apparent sinners may frequently have a good intention, for no one can judge the secrets of the heart of man. That which thou dost not see thou shouldst not judge in thy mind, even though it may externally be open mortal sin, seeing nothing in others, but My Will, not in order to judge, but, as has been said, with holy compassion. In this way thou wilt arrive at perfect purity, because acting thus, thy mind will not be scandalized, either in Me or in thy neighbor. Otherwise thou fallest into contempt of thy neighbor, if thou judgest his evil will towards thee, instead of My Will acting in him. Such contempt and scandal separates the soul from Me, and prevents perfection, and, in some cases, deprives a man of grace, more or less according to the gravity of his contempt, and the hatred which his judgment has conceived against his neighbor.

"A different reward is received by the soul who perceives only My Will, which, as has been said, wishes nothing else but your good; so that everything which I give or permit to happen to you, I give so that you may arrive at the end for which I created you. And because the soul remains always in the love of her neighbor, she remains always in Mine, and thus remains united to Me. Wherefore, in order to arrive at purity, thou must entreat Me to do three things: to grant thee to be united to Me by the affection of love, retaining in thy memory the benefits thou hast received from Me; and with the eye of thy intellect to see the affection of My love, with which I love you inestimably; and in the will of others to discern My Will only, and not their evil will, for I am their Judge, not thou, and, in doing this, thou wilt arrive at all perfection.

"This was the doctrine given to thee by My Truth, if thou rememberest well. Now I tell thee, dearest daughter, that such as these, who have learnt this doctrine, taste the earnest of Eternal Life in this life; and, if thou hast well retained this doctrine, thou wilt not fall into the snares of the devil, because thou wilt recognize them in the case about which thou hast asked Me.

"But, nevertheless, in order to satisfy thy desire more clearly, I will tell thee and show thee how men should never discern by judgment, but with holy compassion."

In what way they, who stand in the above-mentioned third most perfect light, receive the earnest of Eternal Life in this life.

“WHY did I say to thee that they received the earnest of Eternal Life? I say that they receive the earnest-money, but not the full payment, because they wait to receive it in Me, the Eternal Life, where they have life without death, and satiety without disgust, and hunger without pain, for from that divine hunger pain is far away, and though they have what they desire, disgust is far from satiety, for I am the flawless Food of Life. It is true that, in this life, they receive the earnest, and taste it in this way, namely that the soul begins to hunger for the honor of the Eternal God, and for the food of the salvation of other souls, and being hungry, she eats, that is to say, nourishes herself with love of her neighbor, which causes her hunger and desire, for the love of the neighbor is a food which never satiates him who feeds on it, the eater being insatiable and always remains hungry. So this earnest-money is a commencement of a guarantee which is given to man, in virtue of which he expects one day to receive his payment, not through the perfection of the earnest-money in itself, but through faith, through the certitude which he has of reaching the completion of his being and receiving his payment. Wherefore this enamored soul, clothed in My Truth, having already received in this life the earnest of My love, and of her neighbor's, is not yet perfect, but expects perfection in immortal life. I say that this earnest is not perfect, because the soul who tastes it has not, as yet, the perfection which would prevent her feeling pain in herself, or in others. In herself, through the offense done to Me by the law of perversity which is bound in her members and struggles against the spirit, and in others by the offense of her neighbor. She has indeed, in a sense, a perfect grace, but not that perfection of My Saints, who have arrived at Me, Eternal Life, for, as has been said, their desires are without suffering, and yours are not. These servants of Mine, as I have said to thee in another place, who nourish themselves at this table of holy desire, are blessed and full of grief, even as My Only-begotten Son was, on the wood of the holy Cross, because, while His flesh was in grief and torment, His soul was blessed through its union with the Divine nature. In like manner these are blessed by the union of their holy desire towards Me, clothed, as has been said, in My sweet Will, and they are full of grief through compassion for their neighbor, and because they afflict their own self-love, depriving it of sensual delights and consolations.”

How this soul, rendering thanks to God, humiliates herself; then she prays for the whole world and particularly for the mystical body of the Holy Church, and for her spiritual children, and for the two fathers of her soul; and, after these things, she asks to hear something about the defects of the ministers of the Holy Church.

THEN that soul, as if, in truth, inebriated, seemed beside herself, as if the feelings of the body were alienated through the union of love which she had made with her Creator, and as if, in elevation of mind, she had gazed into the eternal truth with the eye of her intellect, and, having recognized the truth, had become enamored of it, and said, “Oh! Supreme and Eternal

Goodness of God, who am I, miserable one, that Thou, Supreme and Eternal Father, hast manifested to me Thy truth, and the hidden deceits of the devil, and the deceitfulness of personal feeling, so that I, and others in this life of pilgrimage, may know how to avoid being deceived by the devil or ourselves! What moved Thee to do it? Love, because Thou lovedst me, without my having loved Thee. Oh, Fire of Love! Thanks, thanks be to Thee, Eternal Father! I am imperfect and full of darkness, and Thou, Perfection and Light, hast shown to me perfection, and the resplendent way of the doctrine of Thy Only-begotten Son. I was dead, and Thou hast brought me to life. I was sick, and Thou hast given me medicine, and not only the medicine of the Blood which Thou gavest for the diseased human race in the person of Thy Son, but also a medicine against a secret infirmity that I knew not of, in this precept that, in no way, can I judge any rational creature, and particularly Thy servants, upon whom oftentimes I, as one blind and sick with this infirmity, passed judgment under the pretext of Thy honor and the salvation of souls. Wherefore, I thank Thee, Supreme and Eternal Good, that, in the manifesting of Thy truth and the deceitfulness of the devil, and our own passions, Thou hast made me know my infirmity. Wherefore I beseech Thee, through grace and mercy, that, from today henceforward, I may never again wander from the path of Thy doctrine, given by Thy goodness to me and to whoever wishes to follow it, because without Thee is nothing done. To Thee, then, Eternal Father, do I have recourse and flee, and I do not beseech Thee for myself alone, Father, but for the whole world, and particularly for the mystical body of the Holy Church, that this truth given to me, miserable one, by Thee, Eternal Truth, may shine in Thy ministers; and also I beseech Thee especially for all those whom Thou hast given me, and whom Thou hast made one thing with me, and whom I love with a particular love, because they will be my refreshment to the glory and praise of Thy Name, when I see them running on this sweet and straight road, pure, and dead to their own will and opinion, and without any passing judgment on their neighbor, or causing him any scandal or murmuring. And I pray Thee, Sweetest Love, that not one of them may be taken from me by the hand of the infernal Devil, so that at last they may arrive at Thee, their End, Eternal Father.

"Also I make another petition to Thee for my two Fathers, the supports whom Thou hast placed on the earth to guard and instruct me, miserable infirm one, from the beginning of my conversion until now, that Thou unite them, and of two bodies make one soul, and that they attend to nothing else than to complete in themselves, and in the mysteries that Thou hast placed in their hands, the glory and praise of Thy Name, and the salvation of souls, and that I, an unworthy and miserable slave, and no daughter, may behave to them with due reverence and holy fear, for love of Thee, in a way that will be to Thine honor, and their peace and quiet, and to the edification of the neighbor. I now know for certain, Eternal Truth, that Thou wilt not despise the desire of the petitions that I have made to Thee, because I know, from seeing what it has pleased Thee to manifest, and still more from proof, that Thou art the Acceptor of holy desires. I, Thy unworthy servant, will strive, according as Thou wilt give me grace, to observe Thy Commandments and Thy doctrine. Now, O Eternal Father, I remember a word which thou didst say to me in speaking of the ministers of the Holy Church, to the effect that Thou wouldest speak to me more distinctly, in some other place, of the sins which they commit today; wherefore if it should please Thy goodness to tell me aught of this matter, I will gladly hear it, so as to have material for increasing my grief, compassion, and anxious desire for their salvation; for I remember that Thou didst say, that, on account of the endurance and tears, the grief, and sweat and prayers of Thy servants, Thou wouldest reform the Holy Church, and comfort her with good and holy pastors. I ask Thee this in order that these sentiments may increase in me."

How God renders this soul attentive to prayer, replying to one of the above-mentioned petitions.

THEN the Eternal God, turning the eye of His mercy upon this soul, not despising her desire, but granting her requests, proceeded to satisfy the last petition, which she had made concerning His promise, saying, "Oh! best beloved and dearest daughter, I will fulfill thy desire in this request, in order that, on thy side, thou mayest not sin through ignorance or negligence; for a fault of thine would be more serious and worthy of graver reproof now than before, because thou hast learnt more of My truth; wherefore apply thyself attentively to pray for all rational creatures, for the mystical body of the Holy Church, and for those friends whom I have given thee, whom thou lovest with particular love, and be careful not to be negligent in giving them the benefit of thy prayers, and the example of thy life, and the teaching of thy words, reproving vice and encouraging virtue according to thy power.

"Concerning the supports which I have given thee, of whom thou didst speak to Me, know that thou art, in truth, a means by which they may each receive, according to their needs and fitness. And as I, thy Creator, grant thee the opportunity, for without Me thou canst do nothing, I will fulfill thy desires, but do not thou fail, or they either, in your hope in Me. My providence will never fail you, and every man, if he be humble, shall receive that which he is fit to receive; and every minister, that which I have given him to administer, each in his own way, according to what he has received and will receive from My goodness."

Of the dignity of the priest; and of the Sacrament of the Body of Christ; and of worthy and unworthy communicants.

NOw I will reply to that which thou didst ask Me concerning the ministers of the Holy Church, and, in order that thou mayest the better understand the truth, open the eye of thy intellect, and look at their excellence and the dignity in which I have placed them. And, since one thing is better known by means of contrast with its contrary, I will show thee the dignity of those who use virtuously the treasure I have placed in their hands; and, in this way, thou wilt the better see the misery of those who today are suckled at the breast of My Spouse." Then this soul obediently contemplated the truth, in which she saw virtue resplendent in those who truly taste it. Then said the Eternal God: "I will first, dearest daughter, speak to thee of the dignity of priests, having placed them where they are through My goodness, over and above the general love which I have had to My creatures, creating you in My image and likeness and re-creating you all to the life of grace in the Blood of My Only-begotten Son, whence you have arrived at such excellence, through the union which I made of My Deity with human nature; so that in this you have greater dignity and excellence than the angels, for I took your human nature and not that of the angels. Wherefore, as I have said to you, I, God, have become man, and man has become God by the union of My Divine Nature with your human nature. This greatness is given in general to all rational creatures, but, among these I have especially chosen My ministers for the sake of your salvation, so that, through them, the Blood of the humble and immaculate Lamb, My Only-begotten Son, may be administered to you. To them have I given the Sun to administer, giving them the light of science and the heat of Divine Love, united together in the color of the Body and Blood of My Son, whose Body is a Sun, because He is one substance with Me, the True Sun, in such a way that He cannot be separated or divided from Me, as in the case of the natural sun, in which heat and light cannot be separated, so perfect is their union; for the sun, never leaving its orbit, lights the whole world and warms whoever wishes to be warmed by it, and is not defiled by any impurity on which it shines, for its light and heat and color are united.

"So this Word, My Son, with His most sweet Blood, is one Sun, all God and all man, because He is one substance with Me and I with Him. My power is not separated from His wisdom, nor the fiery heat of the Holy Spirit from Me, the Father, or from Him, the Son; for He is one substance with us, the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son, and We together forming one and the same Sun; that is to say, I, the Eternal God, am that Sun whence have proceeded the Son and the Holy Spirit. To the Holy Spirit is attributed fire and to the Son wisdom, by which wisdom My ministers receive the light of grace, so that they may administer this light to others, with gratitude for the benefits received from Me, the Eternal Father, following the doctrine of the Eternal Wisdom, My Only-begotten Son. This is that Light, which has the color of your humanity, color and light being closely united. Thus was the light of My Divinity united to the color of your humanity, which color shone brightly when it became perfect through its union with the Divine nature, and, by this means of the Incarnate Word mixed with the Light of My Divine nature and the fiery heat of the Holy Spirit, have you received the Light. Whom have I entrusted with its administration?

"My ministers in the mystical body of the Holy Church, so that you may have life, receiving His Body in food and His Blood in drink. I have said to thee that this Body is, as it were, a Sun. Wherefore, you cannot receive the Body without the Blood, or the Blood or the Body without the Soul of the Incarnate Word; nor the Soul, nor the Body, without the Divinity of Me, the Eternal God, because none of these can be separated from each other, as I said to thee in another place that the Divine nature never left the human nature, either by death or from any other cause. So that you receive the whole Divine Essence in that most Sweet Sacrament concealed under the whiteness of the bread; for as the sun cannot be divided into light, heat, and color, the whole of God and the whole of man cannot be separated under the white mantle of the Host; for even if the Host should be divided into a million particles (if it were possible) in each particle should I be present, whole God and whole Man. When you break a mirror the reflection to be seen in it is not broken; similarly, when the Host is divided God and man are not divided, but remain in each particle. Nor is the Sacrament diminished in itself, except as far as may be in the following example.

"If thou hast a light, and the whole world should come to thee in order to take light from it—the light itself does not diminish—and yet each person has it all. It is true that every one participates more or less in this light, according to the substance into which each one receives the fire. I will develop this metaphor further that thou mayest the better understand Me. Suppose that there are many who bring their candles, one weighing an ounce, others two or six ounces, or a pound, or even more, and light them in the flame, in each candle, whether large or small, is the whole light, that is to say, the heat, the color, and the flame; nevertheless thou wouldst judge that he whose candle weighs an ounce has less of the light than he whose candle weighs a pound. Now the same thing happens to those who receive this Sacrament. Each one carries his own candle, that is the holy desire, with which he receives this Sacrament, which of itself is without light, and lights it by receiving this Sacrament. I say without light, because of yourselves you can do nothing, though I have given you the material, with which you can receive this light and feed it. The material is love, for through love I created you, and without love you cannot live.

"Your being, given to you through love, has received the right disposition in holy Baptism, which you receive in virtue of the Blood of the Word, for in no other way could you participate in this light; you would be like a candle with no wick inside it, which cannot burn or receive light, if you have not received in your souls the wick which catches this Divine Flame, that is to say, the Holy Faith, which you receive, by grace, in Baptism, united with the disposition of your soul created by Me, so fitted for love, that, without love, which is her very food, she cannot live. Where does the soul united in this way obtain light? At the fire of My Divine love, loving and fearing Me, and following the doctrine of My truth. It is true that the soul

becomes more or less lighted according to the material which it brings to the fire; for although you all have one and the same material, in that you are all created to My image and likeness, and, being Christians, possess the light of holy Baptism, each of you may grow in love and virtue by the help of My grace, as may please you. Not that you change the form of what I have given you, but that you increase your strength in love, and your free-will, by using it while you have time, for when time is past you can no longer do so. So that you can increase in love, as has been said, coming with love to receive this sweet and glorious Light, which I have given you as Food for your service, through My ministers, and you receive this Light according to the love and fiery desire with which you approach It.

"The Light Itself you receive entire, as I have said (in the example of those, who in spite of the difference in weight of their candles, all receive the entire light), and not divided, because It cannot be divided, as has been said, either on account of any imperfection of yours who receive, or of the minister; but you personally participate in this light, that is in the grace which you receive in this Sacrament, according to the holy desire with which you dispose yourselves to receive it. He who should go to this sweet Sacrament in the guilt of mortal sin, will receive no grace therefrom, though he actually receive the whole of God and the whole of man. Dost thou know the condition of the soul who receives unworthily? She is like a candle on which water has fallen, which can do nothing but crackle when brought near the flame, for no sooner has the fire touched it, than it is extinguished, and nothing remains but smoke; so this soul has cast the water of guilt within her mind upon the candle which she received in holy Baptism, which has drenched the wick of the grace of Baptism, and, not having heated it at the fire of true contrition and Confession, goes to the table of the altar to receive this Light with her body, and not with her mind, wherefore the Light, since the soul is not disposed as she should be for so great a mystery, does not remain by grace in that soul, but leaves her, and in the soul remains only greater confusion, for her light is extinguished and her sin increased by her darkness. Of the Sacrament she feels nothing but the crackling of a remorseful conscience, not through the defect of the Light Itself, for that can receive no hurt, but on account of the water that was in the soul, which impeded her proper disposition so that she could not receive the Light. See, therefore, that in no way can this Light, united with its heat and its color, be divided, either by the scanty desire of the soul when she receives the Sacrament, or by any defect which may be in the soul, or by any defect of him who administers it, as I told thee of the sun which is not defiled by shining on anything foul, so the sweet Light of this Sacrament cannot be defiled, divided, or diminished in any way, nor can it be detached from its orbit.

"If all the world should receive in Communion the light and heat of this Sun, the Word, My Only-begotten Son, would not be separated from Me—the true Sun, His Eternal Father—because in His mystical Body, the holy Church, He is administered to whoever will receive Him. He remains wholly with Me, and yet you have Him, whole God and whole Man, as I told thee, in the metaphor of the light, that, if all the world came to take light from it, each would have it entire, and yet it would remain whole."

How the bodily sentiments are all deceived in the aforesaid Sacrament, but not those of the soul, therefore it is, with the latter, that one must see, taste, and touch It; and of a beautiful vision this soul had upon this subject.

"Oh, dearest daughter, open well the eye of thy intellect and gaze into the abyss of My love, for there is no rational creature whose heart would not melt for love in contemplating and considering, among the other benefits she receives from Me, the special gift that she receives in the Sacrament.

"And with what eye, dearest daughter, shouldest thou and others look at this mystery, and how shouldest thou touch it? Not only with the bodily sight and touch, because in this Sacrament all bodily perceptions fail.

"The eye can only see, and the hand can only touch, the white substance of the bread, and the taste can only taste the savor of the bread, so that the grosser bodily sentiments are deceived; but the soul cannot be deceived in her sentiments unless she wish to be—that is, unless she let the light of the most Holy Faith be taken away from her by infidelity.

"How is this Sacrament to be truly tasted, seen, and touched? With the sentiment of the soul. With what eye is It to be seen? With the eye of the intellect if within it is the pupil of the most Holy Faith. This eye sees in that whiteness whole God and whole man, the Divine nature united with the human nature, the Body, the Soul, and the Blood of Christ, the Soul united to the Body, the Body and the Soul united with My Divine nature, not detached from Me, as I revealed to thee, if thou remember well, almost in the beginning of thy life; and not so much at first through the eye of thy intellect as through thy bodily eye, although the light being so great thy bodily eyes lost their vision, and only the sight of the eye of thy intellect remained. I showed it to thee for thine enlightenment in the battle that the devil had been waging against thee in this Sacrament; and to make thee increase in love in the light of the most Holy Faith.

"Thou knowest that thou wentest one morning to church at sunrise to hear Mass, having beforehand been tormented by the devil, and thou placedst thyself upright at the altar of the Crucifix, while the priest went to the altar of Mary; thou stoodst there to consider thy sin, fearing to have offended Me through the vexation which the devil had been causing thee, and to consider My love, which had made thee worthy to hear Mass, seeing that thou didst deem thyself unworthy to enter into My holy temple. When the minister came to consecrate, thou raisedst thine eyes above his head while he was saying the words of Consecration,

and I manifested Myself to thee, and thou didst see issue from My breast a light, like a ray from the sun, which proceeds from the circle of the sun without being separated from it, out of the midst of which light came a dove and hovered over the Host, in virtue of the words which the minister was saying. But sight remained alone in the eye of thy intellect, because thy bodily sight was not strong enough to stand the light, and in that place thou didst see and taste the Abyss of the Trinity, whole God and whole Man concealed and veiled in that whiteness that thou sawedst in the bread; and thou perceivedst that the seeing of the Light and the presence of the Word, which thou sawedst intellectually in the whiteness of the bread, did not prevent thee seeing at the same time the actual whiteness of the bread, the one vision did not prevent the other vision, that is to say, the sight of the God-Man revealed in the bread did not prevent the sight of the bread, for neither its whiteness, nor its touch, nor its savor were taken away. This was shown thee by My goodness, as I have said to thee. The eye of the intellect had the true vision, using the pupil of the Holy Faith, for this eye should be thy principal means of vision, inasmuch as it cannot be deceived; wherefore, with it thou shouldest look on this Sacrament. How dost thou touch It? By the hand of love. With this hand alone canst thou touch that which the eye of the intellect has recognized in this Sacrament. The soul touches Me with the hand of love, as if to certify to herself that which she has seen and known through faith. How dost thou taste It? With the palate of holy desire. The corporal palate tastes only the savor of the bread; but the palate of the soul, which is holy desire, tastes God and Man. See, therefore, that the perceptions of the body are deluded, but not those of the soul, for she is illuminated and assured in her own perceptions, for she touches with the hand of love that which the eye of her intellect has seen with the pupil of Holy Faith; and with her palate—that is, with fiery desire—she tastes My burning Charity, My ineffable Love, with which I have made her worthy to receive the tremendous mystery of this Sacrament and the grace which is contained therein. See, therefore, that thou shouldest receive and look on this Sacrament, not only with bodily perceptions, but rather with thy spiritual perceptions, disposing thy soul in the way that has been said, to receive, and taste, and see this Sacrament."

Of the excellent state of the soul who receives the Sacrament in grace.

“**S**EE, dearest daughter, in what an excellent state is the soul who receives, as she should, this Bread of Life, this Food of the Angels. By receiving this Sacrament she dwells in Me and I in her, as the fish in the sea, and the sea in the fish—thus do I dwell in the soul, and the soul in Me—the Sea Pacific. In that soul grace dwells, for, since she has received this Bread of Life in a state of grace, My grace remains in her, after the accidents of bread have been consumed. I leave you the imprint of grace, as does a seal, which, when lifted from the hot wax upon which it has been impressed, leaves behind its imprint, so the virtue of this Sacrament remains in the soul, that is to say, the heat of My Divine charity, and the clemency of the Holy Spirit. There also remains to you the wisdom of My Only-begotten Son, by which the eye of your intellect has been illuminated to see and to know the doctrine of My truth, and, together with this wisdom, you participate in My strength and power, which strengthen the soul against her sensual self-love, against the devil, and against the world. Thou seest then that the imprint remains, when the seal has been taken away, that is, when the material accidents of the bread, having been consumed, this true Sun has returned to Its Centre, not that it was ever really separated from It, but constantly united to Me. The abyss of My loving desire for your salvation has given you, through My dispensation and Divine Providence, coming to the help of your needs, the sweet Truth as Food in this life, where you are pilgrims and travellers, so that you may have refreshment, and not forget the benefit of the Blood. See then how straitly you are constrained and obliged to render Me love, because I love you so much, and, being the Supreme and Eternal Goodness, deserve your love.”

How the things which have been said about the excellence of this Sacrament, have been said that we might know better the dignity of priests; and how God demands in them greater purity than in other creatures.

“**I**HAVE told thee all this, dearest daughter, that thou mayest the better recognize the dignity to which I have called My ministers, so that thy grief at their miseries may be more intense. If they themselves considered their own dignity they would not be in the darkness of mortal sin, or defile the face of their soul. They would not only see their offenses against Me, but also, that, if they gave their bodies to be burned, they would not repay the tremendous grace and favor which they have received, inasmuch as no greater dignity exists in this life. They are My anointed ones, and I call them My Christs, because I have given them the office of administering Me to you, and have placed them like fragrant flowers in the mystical body of the Holy Church. The angel himself has no such dignity, for I have given it to those men whom I have chosen for My ministers, and whom I have appointed as earthly angels in this life. In all souls I demand purity and charity, that they should love Me and their neighbor, helping him by the ministration of prayer, as I said to thee in another place. But far more do I demand purity in My ministers, and love towards Me, and towards their fellow-creatures, administering to them the Body and Blood of My Only-begotten Son, with the fire of charity, and a hunger for the salvation of souls, for the glory and honor of My Name. Even as these ministers require cleanliness in the chalice in which this Sacrifice is made, even so do I require the purity and cleanliness of their heart and soul and mind. And I wish their body to be preserved, as the instrument of the soul in perfect charity; and I do

not wish them to feed upon and wallow in the mire of filth, or to be inflated by pride, seeking great prelacies, or to be cruel to themselves or to their fellow-creatures, because they cannot use cruelty to themselves without being cruel to their fellow-creatures; for, if by sin they are cruel to themselves, they are cruel to the souls of their neighbors, in that they do not give them an example of life, nor care to draw them out of the hands of the devil, nor to administer to them the Body and Blood of My Only-begotten Son, and Me the True Light, as I told thee, and the other Sacraments of the Holy Church. So that, in being cruel to themselves, they are cruel to others."

Of the excellence, virtues, and holy works of virtuous and holy ministers; and how such are like the sun.

"I WILL now speak to thee, in order to give a little refreshment to thy soul, and to mitigate thy grief at the darkness of these miserable subjects, of the holy life of some of My ministers, of whom I have spoken to thee, who are like the sun, for the odor of their virtues mitigates the stench of the vices of the others, and the light thereof shines in their darkness. And, by means of this light, wilt thou the better be able to understand the darkness and sins of My unworthy ministers. Open then the eye of thy intellect and gaze at the Sun of Justice, and thou wilt see those glorious ministers, who, through ministering the Sun, have become like to It, as I told thee of Peter, the prince of the Apostles, who received the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. I say the same of these others, who have administered, in the garden of the Holy Church, the Light, that is to say, the Body and the Blood of My Only-begotten Son, who is Himself the undivided Sun, as has been said, and all the Sacraments of the Holy Church, which all give life in virtue of the Blood. Each one, placed in a different rank, has administered, according to his state, the grace of the Holy Spirit. With what have they administered it? With the light of grace, which they have drawn from this True Light. With light alone? No; because the light cannot be separated from the warmth and color of grace, wherefore a man must either have the light, warmth, and color of grace, or none at all. A man in mortal sin is deprived of the life of grace, and he who is in grace has illuminated the eye of his intellect to know Me, who gave him both grace and the virtue which preserves it, and, in that light, he knows the misery and the reason of sin, that is to say, his own self-love, on which account he hates it, and thereby receives the warmth of Divine love into his affection, which follows his intellect, and he receives the color of this glorious Light, following the doctrine of My sweet Truth, by which his memory is filled with the benefit of the Blood. Thou seest, therefore, that no one can receive the light without receiving the warmth and the color, for they are united together and are one thing; wherefore he cannot, as I have said to thee, have one power of his soul so ordered as to receive Me, the true Sun, unless all three powers of his soul are brought together and ordered in My Name. For, as soon as the eye of the intellect lifts itself with the pupil of faith above sensual vision in the contemplation of Me, affection follows it, loving that which the intellect sees and knows, and the memory is filled with that which the affection loves; and, as soon as these powers are thus disposed, the soul participates in Me, the Sun who illuminates her with My power, and with the wisdom of My Only-begotten Son, and the fiery clemency of the Holy Spirit. See, then, that these have taken on them the condition of the Sun, for, having clothed themselves, and filled the power of their soul with Me, the true Sun, they become like Me. The Sun illuminates them and causes the earth of their souls to germinate with Its heat. Thus do My sweet ministers, elected and anointed and placed in the mystical body of the Holy Church, in order to administer Me, the Sun, that is to say, the Body and Blood of My Only-begotten Son, together with the other Sacraments, which draw their life from this Blood; this they do in two ways, *actually*, in administering the Sacraments, and *spiritually*, by shedding forth in the mystical body of the Holy Church, the light of supernatural science, together with the color of an honorable and holy life, following the doctrine of My truth, which they administer in the ardent love with which they cause barren souls to bear fruit, illuminating them with the light of their science, and driving away the darkness of their mortal sin and infidelity, by the example of their holy and regular life, and reforming the lives of those who live in disorder and darkness of sin, and in coldness, through the privation of charity. So thou seest that they are the Sun, because they have taken the condition of the Sun from Me, the true Sun, because, through affection of love, they are one thing with Me, and I with them, as I narrated to thee in another place, and each one has given light in the Holy Church, according to the position to which I have elected him: Peter with preaching and doctrine, and in the end with blood; Gregory with science, and Holy Scripture, and with the mirror of his life; Sylvester, against the infidels, and with disputation and proving of the most Holy Faith, which he made in word and in deed, receiving virtue from Me. If thou turnest to Augustine, and to the glorious Thomas and Jerome, and the others, thou wilt see how much light they have thrown over this Spouse, extirpating error, like lamps placed upon the candelabra, with true and perfect humility. And, as if famished for such food, they feed upon My honor, and the salvation of souls, upon the table of the most holy Cross. The martyrs, indeed, with blood, which blood cast up sweet perfume before My countenance; and, with the perfume of blood, and of the virtues, and with the light of science, they brought forth fruit in this Spouse and extended the Faith, and, by their means, the light of the most Holy Faith was rekindled in the darkened. And prelates, placed in the position of the prelacy of Christ on earth, offered Me the sacrifice of justice with holy and upright lives. The pearl of justice, with true humility and most ardent love, shone in them, and in their subjects, with the light of discretion. In them, principally because they justly paid Me My due, in rendering glory and praise to My Name, and, to their own sensuality, hatred and displeasure, despising vice and embracing virtue, with love of Me and of their neighbor. With

humility they trampled on pride, and, with purity of heart and of body, came, like angels, to the table of the altar, and, with sincerity of mind, celebrated, burning in the furnace of love. And, because they first had done justice to themselves, they therefore did justice to those under them, wishing to see them live virtuously, and correcting them without any servile fear, because they were not thinking of themselves, but solely of My honor and the salvation of souls, like good shepherds, followers of the Good Shepherd, My Truth, whom I gave you to lead your sheep, having willed that He should give His life for you. These have followed His footsteps, and therefore did they correct them, and did not let their members become putrid for want of correcting, but they charitably corrected them with the unction of benignity, and with the sharpness of fire, cauterizing the wound of sin with reproof and penance, little or much, according to the graveness of the fault. And, in order to correct it and to speak the truth, they did not even fear death. They were true gardeners who, with care and holy tears, took away the thorns of mortal sins, and planted plants odoriferous of virtue. Wherefore, those under them lived in holy, true fear, and grew up like sweet-smelling flowers in the mystical body of the Holy Church (because they were not deprived of correction, and so were not guilty of sin), for My gardeners corrected them without any servile fear, being free from it, and without any sin, for they balanced exactly the scales of holy justice, reproving humbly and without human respect. And this justice was and is that pearl which shines in them, and which gave peace and light in the minds of the people and caused holy fear to be with them, and unity of hearts. And I would that thou know that, more darkness and division have come into the world amongst seculars and religious and the clergy and pastors of the Holy Church, through the lack of the light of justice, and the advent of the darkness of injustice, than from any other causes.

"Neither the civil law, nor the divine law, can be kept in any degree without holy justice, because he who is not corrected, and does not correct others, becomes like a limb which putrefies, and corrupts the whole body, because the bad physician, when it had already begun to corrupt, placed ointment immediately upon it, without having first burnt the wound. So, were the prelate, or any other lord having subjects, on seeing one putrefying from the corruption of mortal sin, to apply to him the ointment of soft words of encouragement alone, without reproof, he would never cure him, but the putrefaction would rather spread to the other members, who, with him, form one body under the same pastor. But if he were a physician, good and true to those souls, as were those glorious pastors of old, he would not give salving ointment without the fire of reproof. And, were the member still to remain obstinate in his evil doing, he would cut him off from the congregation in order that he corrupt not the other members with the putrefaction of mortal sin. But they act not so today, but, in cases of evil doing, they even pretend not to see. And knowest thou wherefore? The root of self-love is alive in them, wherefore they bear perverted and servile fear. Because they fear to lose their position or their temporal goods, or their prelacy, they do not correct, but act like blind ones, in that they see not the real way by which their position is to be kept. If they would only see that it is by holy justice they would be able to maintain it; but they do not, because they are deprived of light. But, thinking to preserve their position with injustice, they do not reprove the faults of those under them; and they are deluded by their own sensitive self-love, or by their desire for lordship and prelacy, and they correct not the faults they should correct in others, because the same or greater ones are their own. They feel themselves comprehended in the guilt, and they therefore lose all ardor and security, and, fettered by servile fear, they make believe not to see. And, moreover, if they do see they do not correct, but allow themselves to be bound over with flattering words and with many presents, and they themselves find the excuse for the guilty ones not to be punished. In such as these are fulfilled the words spoken by My Truth, saying: '*These are blind and leaders of the blind, and if the blind lead the blind, they both fall into the ditch.*' My sweet ministers, of whom I spoke to thee, who have the properties and condition of the sun, did not, and do not (if there be any now) act so. And they are truly suns, as I have told thee, because in them is no darkness of sin, or of ignorance, because they follow the doctrine of My truth. They are not tepid, because they burn in the furnace of My love, and because they are despisers of the grandeurs, positions, and delights of the world. They fear not to correct, for he who does not desire lordship or prelacy will not fear to lose it, and will reprove manfully, and he whose conscience does not reprove him of guilt, does not fear.

"And therefore this pearl of justice was not dimmed in My anointed ones, My Christs (of whom I have narrated to thee), but was resplendent in them, wherefore they embraced voluntary poverty, and sought out vileness with profound humility, and cared not for scorn or villainies, or the detractions of men, or insult, or opprobrium, or pain, or torment.

"They were cursed, and they blessed, and, with true patience, they bore themselves like terrestrial angels, not by nature, but by their ministry, and the supernatural grace given to them, of administering the Body and Blood of My Only-begotten Son. And they are truly angels. Because, as the angel, which I give thee to be thy guardian, ministers to thee holy and good inspirations, so were these ministers angels, and were given by My goodness to be guardians, and therefore had they their eye continually over those under them, like real guardian angels, inspiring in their hearts holy and good thoughts, and offering up for them before Me, sweet and amorous desires with continual prayer, and the doctrine of words, and with example of life. So thou seest that they are angels, placed by My burning love, like lanterns in the mystic body of the Holy Church, to be your guardians, so that you blind ones may have guides to direct you into the way of truth, giving you good inspirations, with prayers and example of life, and doctrine as I said. With how much humility did they govern those under them, and converse with them! With how much hope and lively faith, and therefore with liberality, did they distribute to the poor the substance of the Holy Church, not fearing, or caring if for them and their subjects temporal substance diminished. And they scarcely observed that

which they were really bound to do, that is, to distribute the temporal substance to their own necessity being the poor in the Church. They saved nothing, and after their death there remained no money at all, and there were some even who, for the sake of the poor, left the Church in debt. This was because through the largeness of their charity, and of the hope that they had placed in My providence, they were without servile fear that aught should diminish to them, either spiritual or temporal.

"The sign that a creature hopes in Me and not in himself, is that he does not fear with a servile fear. They who hope in themselves are the ones who fear, and are afraid of their own shadow, and doubt lest the sky and earth fade away before them. With such fears as these, and a perverted hope in their own small knowledge, they spend so much miserable solicitude in acquiring and preserving temporal things, that they turn their back on the spiritual, caring not for them. But they, miserable, faithless, proud ones consider not that I alone am He who provides all things necessary for the soul and the body, and that with the same measure that My creatures hope in Me, will My providence be measured to them. The miserable presumptuous ones do not regard the fact that I am He who is, and they are they who are not, and that they have received their being, and every other additional grace, from My goodness. And therefore his labor may be reputed to be in vain, who watches the city if it be not guarded by Me. All his labor will be vain, if he thinks by his labor or solicitude to keep it, because I alone keep it. It is true that I desire you to use your being, and exercise the graces which I have bestowed upon you, in virtue using the free-will which I have given you, with the light of reason, because though I created you without your help I will not save you without it. I loved you before you were, and those My beloved ones saw and knew this, and therefore they loved Me ineffably, and through their love hoped so greatly in Me that they feared nothing. Sylvester feared not when he stood before the Emperor Constantine disputing with those twelve Jews before the whole crowd, but with lively faith he believed that I being for him, no one could be against him; and in the same way the others all lost their every fear, because they were not alone but were accompanied, because being in the enjoyment of love, they were in Me, and from Me they acquired the light of the wisdom of My Only-begotten Son, and from Me they received the faculty to be strong and powerful against the princes and tyrants of the world, and from Me they had the fire of the Holy Spirit, sharing the clemency and burning love of that Spirit.

"This love was and is the companion of whosoever desires it, with the light of faith, with hope, with fortitude, true patience and long perseverance even until death. So thou seest that because they were not alone but were accompanied they feared nothing. He only who feels himself to be alone, and hopes in himself, deprived of the affection of love, fears, and is afraid of every little thing, because he alone is without Me who give supreme security to the soul who possesses Me through the affection of love. And of this did those glorious ones, My beloved, have full experience, for nothing could injure their souls; but they on the contrary could injure men and the devils, who oftentimes remained bound by the virtue and power that I had given My servants over them. This was because I responded to the love, faith, and hope they had placed in Me. Thy tongue would not be sufficient to relate their virtues, neither the eye of thy intellect to see the fruit which they receive in everlasting life, and that all will receive who follow in their footsteps. They are like precious stones, and as such do they stand in My presence, because I have received their labor and poverty and the light which they shed with the odor of virtues in the mystical body of the Holy Church. And in the life eternal I have placed them in the greatest dignity, and they receive blessing and glory in My sight, because they gave the example of an honorable and holy life, and with light administered the Light of the Body and Blood of My Only-begotten Son, and all the Sacraments. And these My anointed ones and ministers are peculiarly beloved by Me, on account of the dignity which I placed in them, and because this Treasure which I placed in their hands they did not hide through negligence and ignorance, but rather recognized it to be from Me, and exercised it with care and profound humility with true and real virtues; and because I, for the salvation of souls, having placed them in so much excellency they never rested like good shepherds from putting the sheep into the fold of the Holy Church, and even out of love and hunger for souls they gave themselves to die, to get them out of the hands of the devil. They made themselves infirm with those who were infirm, so that they might not be overcome with despair, and to give them more courage in exposing their infirmity, they would oftentimes lend countenance to their infirmity and say, 'I, too, am infirm with thee.' They wept with those who wept, and rejoiced with those who rejoiced; and thus sweetly they knew to give every one his nourishment, preserving the good and rejoicing in their virtues, not being gnawed by envy, but expanded with the broadness of love for their neighbors, and those under them. They drew the imperfect ones out of imperfection, themselves becoming imperfect and infirm with them, as I told thee, with true and holy compassion, and correcting them and giving them penance for the sins they committed—they through love endured their penance together with them. For through love, they who gave the penance, bore more pain than they who received it; and there were even those who actually performed the penance, and especially when they had seen that it had appeared particularly difficult to the penitent. Wherefore by that act the difficulty became changed into sweetness.

"Oh! My beloved ones, they made themselves subjects, being prelates, they made themselves servants, being lords, they made themselves infirm, being whole, and without infirmity and the leprosy of mortal sin, being strong they made themselves weak, with the foolish and simple they showed themselves simple, and with the small insignificant. And so with love they knew how to be all things to all men, and to give to each one his nourishment. What caused them to do thus? The hunger and desire for My honor and the salvation of souls which they had conceived in Me. They ran to feed on it at the table of the holy Cross, not fleeing from or refusing any labor, but with zeal for souls and for the good of the Holy Church and the spread of the Faith, they put themselves in the midst of the thorns of tribulation, and exposed themselves to every peril with true patience,

offering incense odoriferous with anxious desires, and humble and continual prayers. With tears and sweat they anointed the wounds of their neighbor, that is the wounds of the guilt of mortal sin, which latter were perfectly cured, the ointment so made, being received in humility."

A brief repetition of the preceding chapter; and of the reverence which should be paid to priests, whether they are good or bad.

"**I**HAVE shown thee, dearest daughter, a sample of the excellence of good priests (for what I have shown thee is only a sample of what that excellence really is), and I have told thee of the dignity in which I have placed them, having elected them for My ministers, on account of which dignity and authority I do not wish them to be punished by the hand of seculars on account of any personal defect, for those who punish them offend Me miserably. But I wish seculars to hold them in due reverence, not for their own sakes, as I have said, but for Mine, by reason of the authority which I have given them. Wherefore this reverence should never diminish in the case of priests whose virtue grows weak, any more than in the case of those virtuous ones of whose goodness I have spoken to thee; for all alike have been appointed ministers of the Sun—that is of the Body and Blood of My Son, and of the other Sacraments.

"This dignity belongs to good and bad alike—all have the Sun to administer, as has been said, and perfect priests are themselves in a condition of light, that is to say, they illuminate and warm their neighbors through their love. And with this heat they cause virtues to spring up and bear fruit in the souls of their subjects. I have appointed them to be in very truth your guardian angels to protect you; to inspire your hearts with good thoughts by their holy prayers, and to teach you My doctrine reflected in the mirror of their life, and to serve you by administering to you the holy Sacraments, thus serving you, watching over you, and inspiring you with good and holy thoughts as does an angel.

"See, then, that besides the dignity to which I have appointed them, how worthy they are of being loved; when they also possess the adornment of virtue, as did those of whom I spoke to thee, which are all bound and obliged to possess, and in what great reverence you should hold them, for they are My beloved children and shine each as a sun in the mystical body of the Holy Church by their virtues, for every virtuous man is worthy of love, and these all the more by reason of the ministry which I have placed in their hands. You should love them therefore by reason of the virtue and dignity of the Sacrament, and by reason of that very virtue and dignity you should hate the defects of those who live miserably in sin, but not on that account appoint yourselves their judges, which I forbid, because they are My Christs, and you ought to love and reverence the authority which I have given them. You know well that if a filthy and badly dressed person brought you a great treasure from which you obtained life, you would not hate the bearer, however ragged and filthy he might be, through love of the treasure and of the lord who sent it to you. His state would indeed displease you, and you would be anxious through love of his master that he should be cleansed from his foulness and properly clothed. This, then, is your duty according to the demands of charity, and thus I wish you to act with regard to such badly ordered priests, who themselves filthy and clothed in garments ragged with vice through their separation from My love, bring you great Treasures—that is to say, the Sacraments of the Holy Church—from which you obtain the life of grace, receiving them worthily (in spite of the great defects there may be in them) through love of Me, the Eternal God, who send them to you, and through love of that life of grace which you receive from the great treasure, by which they administer to you the whole of God and the whole of Man, that is to say, the Body and Blood of My Son united to My Divine nature. Their sins indeed should displease you, and you should hate them, and strive with love and holy prayer to reclothe them, washing away their foulness with your tears—that is to say, that you should offer them before Me with tears and great desire, that I may reclothe them in My goodness, with the garment of charity. Know well that I wish to do them grace, if only they will dispose themselves to receive it, and you to pray for it; for it is not according to My Will that they should administer to you the Sun being themselves in darkness, not that they should be stripped of the garment of virtue, foully living in dishonor; on the contrary I have given them to you, and appointed them to be earthly angels and suns, as I have said. It is not being My Will that they should be in this state, you should pray for them, and not judge them, leaving their judgment to Me. And I, moved by your prayers, will do them mercy if they will only receive it, but if they do not correct their life, their dignity will be the cause of their ruin. For if they do not accept the breadth of My mercy, I, the Supreme Judge, shall terribly condemn them at their last extremity, and they will be sent to the eternal fire."

Of the difference between the death of a just man and that of a sinner, and first of the death of the just man.

"**H**AVING told thee how the world and the devils accuse these wretches, which is indeed the truth, I wish to speak to thee in more detail on this point (so that thou mayest have greater compassion on these poor wretches), telling thee how different are the struggles of the soul of a just man to those of a sinner, and how different are their deaths, and how the peace of the just man's death is greater or less according to the perfection of his soul. For I wish thee to know that all the sufferings which rational creatures endure depend on their will, because if their will were in accordance with mine they would endure no

suffering, not that they would have no labors on that account, but because labors cause no suffering to a will which gladly endures them, seeing that they are ordained by My Will. Such men as these wage war with the world, the devil, and their own sensuality through holy hatred of themselves. Wherefore when they come to the point of death, they die peacefully, because they have vanquished their enemies during their life. The world cannot accuse such a man, because he saw through its deceptions and therefore renounced it with all its delights. His sensual fragility and his body do not accuse him, because he bound sensuality like a slave with the rein of reason, macerating his flesh with penance, with watchings, and humble and continual prayer. The will of his senses he slew with hatred and dislike of vice, and with love of virtue. He has entirely lost all tenderness for his body, which tenderness and love between the soul and the body makes death seem difficult, and on account of it man naturally fears death; but since the virtue of a just and perfect man transcends nature, extinguishing his natural fear and overcoming it with holy hatred of himself and desire of arriving at his last end, his natural tenderness cannot make war on him, and his conscience remains in peace; for during his life his conscience kept a good guard, warning him when enemies were coming to attack the city of his soul, like a watchdog which stands at the door, and when it sees enemies warns the guards by its barking, for in this way the dog of conscience warns the sentry of reason, and the reason together with the free-will know by the light of the intellect whether the stranger be friend or enemy. To a friend, that is to say, to virtue and holy thoughts, he gave his delighted love, receiving and using these with great solicitude; to an enemy, that is to say, to vice and wicked thoughts, he gave hatred and displeasure. And with the knife of hatred of self, and love of Me, and with the light of reason, and the hand of free-will he struck his enemies; so that at the point of death his conscience, having been a faithful guardian, does not gnaw but remains in peace.

"It is true that a just soul, through humility, and because at the moment of death she realizes better the value of time and of the jewels of virtue, reproves herself, seeming to herself to have used her time but little; but this is not an afflictive pain, but rather profitable, for the soul recollects in her

Of the death of sinners, and of their pains in the hour of death.

"**N**OT so excellent, dearest daughter, is the end of these other poor wretches who are in great misery as I have related to thee. How terrible and dark is their death! Because in the moment of death, as I told thee, the devil accuses them with great terror and darkness, showing his face, which thou knowest is so horrible that the creature would rather choose any pain that can be suffered in this world than see it; and so greatly does he freshen the sting of conscience that it gnaws him horribly. The disordinate delights and sensuality of which he made lords over his reason, accuse him miserably, because then he knows the truth of that which at first he knew not, and his error brings him to great confusion.

"In his life he lived unfaithfully to Me—self-love having veiled the pupil of the most Holy Faith—wherefore the devil torments him with infidelity in order to bring him to despair. Oh! how hard for them is this battle, because it finds them disarmed, without the armor of affection and charity; because, as members of the devil, they have been deprived of it all. Wherefore they have not the supernatural light, neither the light of science, because they did not understand it, the horns of their pride not letting them understand the sweetness of its marrow. Wherefore now in the great battle they know not what to do. They are not nourished in hope, because they have not hoped in Me, neither in the Blood of which I made them ministers, but in themselves alone, and in the dignities and delights of the world. And the incarnate wretch did not see that all was counted to him with interest, and that as a debtor he would have to render an account to Me; now he finds himself denuded and without any virtue, and on whichever side he turns he hears nothing but reproaches with great confusion. His injustice which he practiced in his life accuses him to his conscience, wherefore he dares not ask other than justice.

"And I tell thee that so great is that shame and confusion that unless in their life they have taken the habit of hoping in My mercy, that is, have taken the milk of mercy (although on account of their sins this is great presumption, for you cannot truly say that he who strikes Me with the arm of My mercy has a hope in mercy, but rather has presumption), there is not one who would not despair, and with despair they would arrive with the devil in eternal damnation.

"But arriving at the extremity of death, and recognizing his sin, his conscience unloaded by holy Confession, and presumption taken away, so that he offends no more, there remains mercy, and with this mercy he can, if he will, take hold on hope. This is the effect of Mercy to cause them to hope therein during their life, although I do not grant them this, so that they should offend Me by means of My mercy, but rather that they should dilate themselves in charity, and in the consideration of My goodness. But they act in a contrary way, because they offend Me in the hope which they have in My mercy. And nevertheless, I keep them in this hope so that at the last moment they may have something which they may lay hold of, and by so doing not faint away with the condemnation which they receive, and thus arrive at despair; for this final sin of despair is much more displeasing to Me and injures them much more than all the other sins which they have committed. And this is the reason why this sin is more dangerous to them and displeasing to Me, because they commit other sins through some delight of their own sensuality, and they sometimes grieve for them, and if they grieve in the right way their grief will procure them mercy. But it is no fragility of your nature which moves you to despair, for there is no pleasure and nothing but intolerable suffering in it. One who despairs despises My mercy, making his sin to be greater than mercy and goodness. Wherefore, if a man fall into this

sin, he does not repent, and does not truly grieve for his offense against Me as he should, grieving indeed for his own loss, but not for the offense done to Me, and therefore he receives eternal damnation. See, therefore, that this sin alone leads him to Hell, where he is punished for this and all the other sins which he has committed; whereas had he grieved and repented for the offense done to Me, and hoped in My mercy, he would have found mercy, for, as I have said to thee, My mercy is greater without any comparison than all the sins which any creature can commit; wherefore it greatly displeases Me that they should consider their sins to be greater.

"Despair is that sin which is pardoned neither here nor hereafter, and it is because despair displeases Me so much that I wish them to hope in My mercy at the point of death, even if their life has been disordered and wicked. This is why during their life I use this sweet trick with them, making them hope greatly in My mercy, for when, having fed themselves with this hope, they arrive at death, they are not so inclined to abandon it, on account of the severe condemnation they receive, as if they had not so nourished themselves.

"All this is given them by the fire and abyss of My inestimable love, but because they have used it in the darkness of self-love, from which has proceeded their every sin, they have not known it in truth, but insofar as they have turned their affections towards the sweetness of My mercy they have thought of it with great presumption. And this is another cause of reproof which their conscience gives them in the likeness of the devil, reproving them in that they should have used the time and the breadth of My mercy in which they hoped, in charity and love of virtue, and that time which I gave them through love should have been spent in holiness, whereas with all their time and great hope of My mercy they did nothing but offend Me miserably. Oh, blinder than the blind! Thou hast hidden thy pearl and thy talent which I placed in thy hands in order that thou mightest gain more with it, but thou in thy presumption wouldest not do My Will, rather thou didst hide it under the ground of disordinate self-love, which now renders thee the fruit of death.

"Thy miseries are not hid from thee now, for the worm of conscience sleeps no longer, but is gnawing thee, the devils shout and render to thee the reward which they are accustomed to give their servants, that is to say, confusion and condemnation; they wish to bring thee to despair, so that at the moment of death thou mayest not escape from their hands, and therefore they try to confuse thee, so that afterwards when thou art with them they may render to thee of the part which is theirs. Oh, wretch! The dignity in which I placed thee, thou now seest shining as it really is, and thou knowest to thy shame that thou hast held and used in such guilty darkness the substance of the Holy Church, that thou seest thyself to be a thief, a debtor, who ought to pay his debt to the poor and the Holy Church. Then thy conscience represents to thee that thou hast spent the money on public harlots, and hast brought up thy children and enriched thy relations, and hast thrown it away on gluttony and on many silver vessels and other adornments for thy house. Whereas thou shouldst have lived in voluntary poverty.

"Thy conscience represents to thee the Divine Office which thou didst neglect, by which thou didst fall into the guilt of mortal sin, and how even when thou didst recite it with thy mouth thy heart was far from Me. Conscience also shows thee thy subjects, that is to say, the love and hunger which thou shouldst have felt towards nourishing them in virtue, giving them the example of thy life and striking them with the hand of mercy and the rod of justice, and because thou didst the contrary thy conscience and the horrible likeness of the devil reproves thee.

"And if as a prelate thou hast given prelacies or any charge of souls unjustly to one of thy subjects, that is, that thou hast not considered to whom and how thou wert giving it, the devil puts this also before thy conscience, because thou oughtest to have given it, not on account of pleasant words, nor in order to please creatures, nor for the sake of gifts, but solely with regard to virtue, My honor and the salvation of souls. And since thou hast not done so thou art reproved, and for thy greater pain and confusion thou hast before thy conscience and the light of thine intellect that which thou hast done and ought not to have done, and that which thou oughtest to have done and hast not done.

"I wish thee to know, dearest daughter, that whiteness is better seen when placed on a black ground, and blackness on a white, than when they are separated. So it happens to these wretches, to these in particular and to all others in general, for at death when the soul begins to see its woes, and the just man his beatitude, his evil life is represented to a wicked man, and there is no reason that any one should remind him of the sins that he has committed, for his conscience places them before him, together with the virtues which he ought to have practiced. Why the virtues? For his greater shame. For vice being placed on a ground of virtue is known better on account of the virtue, and the better he knows his sin, the greater his shame, and by comparison with his sin he knows better the perfection of virtue, wherefore he grieves the more, for he sees that his own life was devoid of any; and I wish thee to know that in this knowledge which dying sinners have of virtue and vice they see only too clearly the good which follows the virtue of a just man, and the pain that comes on him who has lain in the darkness of mortal sin. I do not give him this knowledge so that he may despair, but so that he may come to a perfect self-knowledge and shame for his sins, with hope, so that with that pain and knowledge he may pay for his sins, and appease My anger, humbly begging My mercy. The virtuous man increases thereby in joy and in knowledge of My love, for he attributes the grace of having followed virtue in the doctrine of My truth to Me and not to himself, wherefore he exalts in Me, with this truly illuminated knowledge, and tastes and receives the sweet end of his being in the way which I have related to thee in another place. So that the one, that is to say, the just man, who has lived in ardent charity, exults in joy, while the wicked man is darkened and confounded in sorrow.

"To the just man the appearance and vision of the devil causes no harm or fear, for fear and harm can only be caused to him by sin; but those who have passed their lives lasciviously and in many sins, receive both harm and fear from the appearance of the devils, not indeed the harm of despair if they do not wish it, but the suffering of condemnation, of the refreshing of the worm of conscience, and of fear and terror at their horrible aspect. See now, dearest daughter, how different are the sufferings and the battle of death to a just man and to a sinner, and how different is their end.

"I have shown to the eye of thy intellect a very small part of what happens, and so small is what I have shown thee with regard to what it really is, to the suffering, that is, of the one, and the happiness of the other, that it is but a trifle. See how great is the blindness of man, and in particular of these ministers, for the more they have received of Me, and the more they are enlightened by the Holy Scripture, the greater are their obligations and more intolerable confusion do they receive for not fulfilling them; the more they knew of Holy Scripture during their life, the better do they know at their death the great sins they have committed, and their torments are greater than those of others, just as good men are placed in a higher degree of excellence. Theirs is the fate of the false Christian, who is placed in Hell in greater torment than a pagan, because he had the light of faith and renounced it, while the pagan never had it.

"So these wretches will be punished more than other Christians for the same sin, on account of the ministry which I entrusted to them, appointing them to administer the sun of the holy Sacrament, and because they had the light of science, in order to discern the truth both for themselves and others had they wished to; wherefore they justly receive the greater pains. But the wretches do not know this, for did they consider their state at all, they would not come to such misery, but would be that which they ought to be and are not. For the whole world has thus become corrupt, they being much more guilty than seculars, according to their state; for with their stench they defile the face of their soul, and corrupt their subjects, and suck the blood from My Spouse, that is, the Holy Church, wherefore through these sins they make her grow pale, because they divert to themselves the love and charity which they should have to this divine Spouse, and think of nothing but stripping her for their own advantage, seizing prelacies, and great properties, when they ought to be seeking souls. Wherefore through their evil life, seculars become irreverent and disobedient to the Holy Church, not that they ought on that account to do so, or that their sins are excused through the sins of My ministers."

How this devout soul, praising and thanking God, made a prayer for the Holy Church.

THEN this soul, as if inebriated, tormented, and on fire with love, her heart wounded with great bitterness, turned herself to the Supreme and Eternal Goodness, saying: "Oh! Eternal God! Oh! Light above every other light, from whom issues all light! Oh! Fire above every fire, because Thou art the only Fire who burnest without consuming, and consumest all sin and self-love found in the soul, not afflicting her, but fattening her with insatiable love, and though the soul is filled she is not sated, but ever desires Thee, and the more of Thee she has, the more she seeks—and the more she desires, the more she finds and tastes of Thee—Supreme and Eternal Fire, Abyss of Charity. Oh! Supreme and Eternal Good, who has moved Thee, Infinite God, to illuminate me, Thy finite creature, with the light of Thy truth? Thou, the same Fire of Love art the cause, because it is always love which constrained and constrains Thee to create us in Thine image and likeness, and to do us mercy, giving immeasurable and infinite graces to Thy rational creatures, Oh, Goodness above all goodness! Thou alone art He who is Supreme Good, and nevertheless Thou gavest the Word, Thy Only-begotten Son, to converse with us filthy ones and filled with darkness. What was the cause of this? Love. Because Thou lovedst us before we were. Oh, Good! Oh, Eternal Greatness! Thou madest Thyself low and small to make man great. On whichever side I turn I find nothing but the abyss and fire of Thy charity. And can a wretch like me pay back to Thee the graces and the burning charity that Thou hast shown and shonest with so much burning love in particular to me beyond common charity, and the love that Thou shonest to all Thy creatures? No, but Thou alone, most sweet and amorous Father, art He who will be thankful and grateful for me, that is, that the affection of Thy charity itself will render Thee thanks, because I am she who is not, and if I spoke as being anything of myself, I should be lying by my own head, and should be a lying daughter of the devil, who is the father of lies, because Thou alone art He who is. And my being and every further grace that Thou hast bestowed upon me, I have from Thee, who givest them to me through love, and not as my due.

"Oh! sweetest Father, when the human race lay sick through the sin of Adam, Thou didst send it a Physician, the sweet and amorous Word—Thy Son; and now, when I was lying infirm with the sickness of negligence and much ignorance, Thou, most soothing and sweet Physician, Eternal God, hast given a soothing, sweet, and bitter medicine, that I may be cured and rise from my infirmity. Thou hast soothed me because with Thy love and gentleness Thou hast manifested Thyself to me, Sweet above all sweetness, and hast illuminated the eye of my intellect with the light of most holy faith, with which light, according as it has pleased Thee to manifest it to me, I have known the excellence of grace which Thou hast given to the human race, administering to it the entire God-Man in the mystic body of the Holy Church. And I have known the dignity of Thy ministers whom Thou hast appointed to administer Thee to us. I desired that Thou wouldest fulfill the promise that Thou madest to me, and Thou gavest much more, more even than I knew how to ask for. Wherefore I know in truth that the heart of man knows not how to ask or desire as much as Thou canst give, and thus I see that Thou art He who is the Supreme and Eternal Good, and that we are they who are not. And because Thou art infinite, and we are finite, Thou givest that which Thy rational creature cannot

desire enough; for she cannot desire it in itself, nor in the way in which Thou canst and wilt satisfy the soul, filling her with things for which she does not ask Thee. Moreover, I have received light from Thy greatness and charity, through the love which Thou hast for the whole human race, and in particular for Thy anointed ones, who ought to be earthly angels in this life. Thou hast shown me the virtue and beatitude of these Thy anointed ones who have lived like burning lamps, shining with the Pearl of Justice in the Holy Church. And by comparison with these I have better understood the sins of those who live wretchedly. Wherefore I have conceived a very great sorrow at Thy offense and the harm done to the whole world, for they do harm to the world, being mirrors of sin when they ought to be mirrors of virtue. And because Thou hast manifested and grieved over their iniquities to me—a wretch who am the cause and instrument of many sins—I am plunged in intolerable grief.

“Thou, oh inestimable love, hast manifested this to me, giving me a sweet and bitter medicine that I might wholly arise out of the infirmity of my ignorance and negligence, and have recourse to Thee with anxious and solicitous desire, knowing myself and Thy goodness and the offenses which are committed against Thee by all sorts of people, so that I might shed a river of tears, drawn from the knowledge of Thy infinite goodness, over my wretched self and over those who are dead in that they live miserably. Wherefore I do not wish, oh Eternal Father, ineffable Fire of Love, that my heart should ever grow weary, or my eyes fail through tears, in desiring Thy honor and the salvation of souls, but I beg of Thee, by Thy grace, that they may be as two streams of water issuing from Thee, the Sea Pacific. Thanks, thanks to Thee, oh Father, for having granted me that which I asked Thee and that which I neither knew nor asked, for by thus giving me matter for grief Thou hast invited me to offer before Thee sweet, loving, and yearning desires, with humble and continual prayer. Now I beg of Thee that Thou wilt do mercy to the world and to the Holy Church. I pray Thee to fulfill that which Thou didst cause me to ask Thee. Alas, what a wretched and sorrowful soul is mine, the cause of all these evils! Do not put off any longer Thy merciful designs toward the world, but descend and fulfill the desire of Thy servants.

“Ah me! Thou causest them to cry in order to hear their voices! Thy truth told us to cry out, and we should be answered; to knock, and it would be opened to us; to beg, and it would be given to us. Oh! Eternal Father, Thy servants do cry out to Thy mercy; do Thou then reply.

“I know well that mercy is Thine own attribute, wherefore Thou canst not destroy it or refuse it to him who asks for it. Thy servants knock at the door of Thy truth, because in the truth of Thy Only-begotten Son they know the ineffable love which Thou hast for man, wherefore the fire of Thy love ought not and cannot refrain from opening to him who knocks with perseverance. Wherefore open, unlock, and break the hardened hearts of Thy creatures, not for their sakes who do not knock, but on account of Thy infinite goodness, and through love of Thy servants who knock at Thee for their sakes. Grant the prayer of those, Eternal Father who, as Thou seest, stand at the door of Thy truth and pray. For what do they pray? For with the Blood of this door—Thy truth—hast Thou washed our iniquities and destroyed the stain of Adam’s sin. The Blood is ours, for Thou hast made it our bath, wherefore Thou canst not deny it to any one who truly asks for it. Give, then, the fruit of Thy blood to Thy creatures. Place in the balance the price of the Blood of Thy Son, so that the infernal devils may not carry off Thy lambs. Thou art the Good Shepherd who, to fulfill Thy obedience, laid down His life for Thy lambs, and made for us a bath of His blood.

“That Blood is what Thy hungry servants beg of Thee at this door, begging Thee through it to do mercy to the world, and to cause Thy holy Church to bloom with the fragrant flowers of good and holy pastors, who by their sweet odor shall extinguish the stench of the putrid flowers of sin. Thou hast said, Eternal Father, that through the love which Thou hast for Thy rational creatures, and the prayers and the many virtues and labors of Thy servants, Thou wouldest do mercy to the world, and reform the Church, and thus give us refreshment; wherefore do not delay, but turn the eye of Thy mercy towards us, for Thou must first reply to us before we can cry out with the voice of Thy mercy. Open the door of Thy inestimable love which Thou hast given us through the door of Thy Word. I know indeed that Thou openest before even we can knock, for it is with the affection of love which Thou hast given to Thy servants, that they knock and cry to Thee, seeking Thy honor and the salvation of souls. Give them then the Bread of Life, that is to say, the fruit of the Blood of Thy Only-begotten Son, which they ask of Thee for the praise and glory of Thy Name and the salvation of souls. For more glory and praise will be Thine in saving so many creatures, than in leaving them obstinate in their hardness of heart. To Thee, Eternal Father, everything is possible, and even though Thou hast created us without our own help, Thou wilt not save us without it. I beg of Thee to force their wills, and dispose them to wish for that for which they do not wish; and this I ask Thee through Thy infinite mercy. Thou hast created us from nothing, now, therefore, that we are in existence, do mercy to us, and remake the vessels which Thou hast created to Thy image and likeness. Re-create them to Grace in Thy mercy and the Blood of Thy Son sweet Christ Jesus.”

Here begins the treatise of obedience, and first of where obedience may be found, and what it is that destroys it, and what is the sign of a man's possessing it, and what accompanies and nourishes obedience.

THE Supreme and Eternal Father, kindly turning the eye of His mercy and clemency towards her, replied: "Thy holy desire and righteous request, oh dearest daughter, have a right to be heard, and inasmuch as I am the Supreme Truth, I will keep My word, fulfilling the promise which I made to thee, and satisfying thy desire. And if thou ask Me where obedience is to be found, and what is the cause of its loss, and the sign of its possession, I reply that thou wilt find it in its completeness in the sweet and amorous Word, My Only-begotten Son. So prompt in Him was this virtue, that, in order to fulfill it, He hastened to the shameful death of the Cross. What destroys obedience? Look at the first man and thou wilt see the cause which destroyed the obedience imposed on him by Me, the Eternal Father. It was pride, which was produced by self-love, and desire to please his companion. This was the cause that deprived him of the perfection of obedience, giving him instead disobedience, depriving him of the life of grace, and slaying his innocence, wherefore he fell into impurity and great misery, and not only he, but the whole human race, as I said to thee. The sign that thou hast this virtue is patience, and impatience the sign that you have it not, and thou wilt find that this is indeed so, when I speak to thee further concerning this virtue. But observe that obedience may be kept in two ways, of which one is more perfect than the other, not that they are on that account separated, but united as I explained to thee of the precepts and counsels. The one way is the most perfect, the other is also good and perfect; for no one at all can reach Eternal Life if he be not obedient, for the door was unlocked by the key of obedience, which had been fastened by the disobedience of Adam. I, then, being constrained by My infinite goodness, since I saw that man whom I so much loved, did not return to Me, his End, took the keys of obedience and placed them in the hands of My sweet and amorous Word—the Truth—and He becoming the porter of that door, opened it, and no one can enter except by means of that door and that Porter. Wherefore He said in the Holy Gospel that "*no one could come to Me, the Father, if not by Him.*" When He returned to Me, rising to Heaven from the conversation of men at the Ascension, He left you this sweet key of obedience; for as thou knowest He left His Vicar, the Christ on earth, whom you are all obliged to obey until death, and whoever is outside his obedience is in a state of damnation, as I have already told thee in another place. Now I wish thee to see and know this most excellent virtue in that humble and immaculate Lamb, and the source whence it proceeds. What caused the great obedience of the Word? The love which He had for My honor and your salvation. Whence proceeded this love? From the clear vision with which His soul saw the divine essence and the eternal Trinity, thus always looking on Me, the eternal God. His fidelity obtained this vision most perfectly for Him, which vision you imperfectly enjoy by the light of holy faith. He was faithful to Me, His eternal Father, and therefore hastened as one enamored along the road of obedience, lit up with the light of glory. And inasmuch as love cannot be alone, but is accompanied by all the true and royal virtues, because all the virtues draw their life from love, He possessed them all, but in a different way from that in which you do. Among the others he possessed patience, which is the marrow of obedience, and a demonstrative sign, whether a soul be in a state of grace and truly love or not. Wherefore charity, the mother of patience, has given her as a sister to obedience, and so closely united them together that one cannot be lost without the other. Either thou hast them both or thou hast neither. This virtue has a nurse who feeds her, that is, true humility; therefore a soul is obedient in proportion to her humility, and humble in proportion to her obedience. This humility is the foster-mother and nurse of charity, and with the same milk she feeds the virtue of obedience. Her raiment given her by this nurse is self-contempt, and insult, desire to displease herself, and to please Me. Where does she find this? In sweet Christ Jesus, My Only-begotten Son. For who abased Himself more than He did! He was sated with insults, jibes, and mockings. He caused pain to Himself in His bodily life, in order to please Me. And who was more patient than He? For His cry was never heard in murmuring, but He patiently embraced His injuries like one enamored, fulfilling the obedience imposed on Him by Me, His Eternal Father. Wherefore in Him thou wilt find obedience perfectly accomplished. He left you this rule and this doctrine, which gives you life, for it is the straight way, having first observed them Himself. He is the way, wherefore He said, "*He was the Way, the Truth, and the Life.*" For he who travels by that way, travels in the light, and being enlightened cannot stumble, or be caused to fall, without perceiving it. For he has cast from himself the darkness of self-love, by which he fell into disobedience; for as I spoke to thee of a companion virtue proceeding from obedience and humility, so I tell you that disobedience comes from pride, which issues from self-love depriving the soul of humility. The sister given by self-love to disobedience is impatience, and pride, her foster-mother, feeds her with the darkness of infidelity, so she hastens along the way of darkness, which leads her to eternal death. All this you should read in that glorious book, where you find described this and every other virtue."

How obedience is the key with which Heaven is opened, and how the soul should fasten it by

means of a cord to her girdle, and of the excellences of obedience.

“**N**Ow that I have shown thee where obedience is to be found, and whence she comes, and who is her companion, and who her foster-mother, I will continue to speak of the obedient and of the disobedient together, and of obedience in general, which is the obedience of the precepts; and in particular, which is that of the counsels. The whole of your faith is founded upon obedience, for by it you prove your fidelity. You are all in general by My truth to obey the commandments of the law, the chief of which is to love Me above everything, and your neighbor as yourself, and the commandments are so bound up together, that you cannot observe or transgress one without observing or transgressing all. He who observes this principal commandment observes all the others; he is faithful to Me and his neighbor, for he loves Me and My creatures, and is therefore obedient, becoming subject to the commandments of the law, and to creatures for My sake, and with humble patience he endures every labor, and even his neighbor’s detraction of him. This obedience is of such excellence that you all derive grace from it, just as from disobedience you all derive death. Wherefore it is not enough that it should be only in word, and not practiced by you. I have already told you that this word is the key which opens Heaven, which key My Son placed in the hands of His Vicar. This Vicar placed it in the hands of everyone who receives holy Baptism, promising therein to renounce the world and all its pomps and delights, and to obey. So that each man has in his own person that very same key which the Word had, and if a man does not unlock in the light of faith, and with the hand of love the gate of Heaven by means of this key, he never will enter there, in spite of its having been opened by the Word; for though I created you without yourselves, I will not save you without yourselves. Wherefore you must take the key in your hand and walk by the doctrine of My Word, and not remain seated, that is to say, placing your love in finite things, as do foolish men who follow the first man, their first father, following his example, and casting the key of obedience into the mud of impurity, breaking it with the hammer of pride, rusting it with self-love. It would have been entirely destroyed had not My Only-begotten Son, the Word, come and taken this key of obedience in His hands and purified it in the fire of divine love, having drawn it out of the mud, and cleansed it with His blood, and straightened it with the knife of justice, and hammered your iniquities into shape on the anvil of His own body. So perfectly did He repair it that no matter how much a man may have spoilt his key by his free-will, by the self-same free-will, assisted by My grace, he can repair it with the same instruments that were used by My Word. Oh, blinder than the blind, for, having spoilt the key of obedience, thou dost not think of mending it! Dost thou think, forsooth, that the disobedience which closed the door of Heaven will open it? that the pride which fell can rise? Dost thou think to be admitted to the marriage feast in foul and disordered garments? Dost thou think that sitting down and binding thyself with the chain of mortal sin, thou canst walk? or that without a key thou canst open the door? Do not imagine that thou canst, for it is a fantastical delusion; thou must be firm, thou must leave mortal sin by a holy Confession, contrition of heart, satisfaction, and purpose of amendment. Then thou wilt throw off that hideous and defiled garment and, clothed in the shining nuptial robe, will hasten, the key of obedience in thy hand, to open the door. But bind this key with the cord of self-contempt, and hatred of thyself and of the world, and fasten it to the love of pleasing Me, thy Creator, of which thou shouldest make a girdle to thyself to bind thy loins with it, for fear thou lose it. Know, My daughter, there are many who take up this key of obedience, having seen by the light of faith that in no other way can they escape eternal damnation; but they hold it in their hand without wearing this girdle, or fastening the key to it with the cord of self-contempt, that is to say that they are not perfectly clothed with My pleasure, but still seek to please themselves; they do not wear the cord of self-contempt, for they do not desire to be despised, but rather take delight in the praise of men. Such as these are apt to lose their key; for if they suffer a little extra fatigue, or mental or corporal tribulation, and if, as often happens, the hand of holy desire loosens its grasp, they will lose it. They can indeed find it again if they wish to while they live, but if they do not wish they will never find it, and what will prove to them that they have lost it? Impatience, for patience was united to obedience, and their impatience proves that obedience does not dwell in their soul, Oh, how sweet and glorious is this virtue, which contains all the rest, for she is conceived and born of charity, on her is founded the rock of the Holy Faith! She is a queen whose consort will feel no trouble, but only peace and quiet; the waves of the stormy sea cannot hurt her, nor can any tempest reach the interior of the soul in whom she dwells. Such a one feels no hatred when injured, because he wishes to obey the precept of forgiveness, he suffers not when his appetites are not satisfied, because obedience has ordered him to desire Me alone, who can and will satisfy all his desires, if he strip himself of worldly riches. And so in all things which would be too long to relate, he who has chosen as spouse Queen Obedience, the appointed key of Heaven, finds peace and quiet. Oh, blessed obedience! thou voyagest without fatigue, and reachest without danger the port of salvation, thou art conformed to My Only-begotten Son, the Word, thou boardest the ship of the holy Cross, forcing thyself to endure, so as not to transgress the obedience of the Word, nor abandon His doctrine, of which thou makest a table when thou eatest the food of souls, dwelling in the love of thy neighbor, being anointed with true humility, which saves thee from coveting, contrary to My Will, his possessions, thou walkest erect, without bending, for thy heart is sincere and not false, loving generously and truly My creatures, thou art a sunrise drawing after thee the light of divine grace, thou art a sun which makes the earth, that is to say, the organs of the soul, to germinate with the heat of charity, all of which as well as those of the body produce life-giving fruit for thyself and thy neighbor. Thou art even cheerful, for thy face is never wrinkled with impatience, but smooth and pleasant with the happiness of patience, and even in its fortitude thou art great by thy long endurance, so long that it reaches from earth to Heaven and unlocks

the celestial door. Thou art a hidden pearl, trampled by the world, abasing thyself, submitting to all creatures. Yet thy kingdom is so great that no one can rule thee, for thou hast come out of the mortal servitude of thy own sensuality, which destroyed thy dignity, and having slain this enemy with hatred and dislike of thy own pleasure hast re-obtained thy liberty."

Here both the misery of the disobedient and the excellence of the obedient are spoken of.

"**A**LL this, dearest daughter, has been done by My goodness and providence as I have told thee, for by My providence the Word repaired the key of obedience, but worldly men devoid of every virtue do the contrary, they, like unbridled horses, without the bit of obedience, go from bad to worse, from sin to sin, from misery to misery, from darkness to darkness, from death to death, until they finally reach the edge of the ditch of death, gnawed by the worm of their conscience, and though it is true that they can obey the precepts of the law if they will, and have the time repenting of their disobedience, it is very hard for them to do so, on account of their long habit of sin. Therefore let no man trust to this, putting off his finding of the key of obedience to the moment of his death, for although every one may and should hope as long as he has life, he should not put such trust in this hope as to delay repentance. What is the reason of all this, and of such blindness that prevents them recognizing this treasure? The cloud of self-love and wretched pride, through which they abandoned obedience, and fell into disobedience. Being disobedient they are impatient, as has been said, and in their impatience endure intolerable pain, for it has seduced them from the way of Truth, leading them along a way of lies, making them slaves and friends of the devils with whom, unless indeed they amend themselves with patience, they will go to the eternal torments. Contrariwise, My beloved sons, obedient and observers of the law rejoice and exult in My eternal vision with the Immaculate and humble Lamb, the Maker, Fulfiller, and Giver of this law of obedience. Observing this law in this life they taste peace without any disturbance, they receive and clothe themselves in the most perfect peace, for there they possess every good without any evil, safety without any fear, riches without any poverty, satiety without disgust, hunger without pain, light without darkness, one supreme infinite good, shared by all those who taste it truly. What has placed them in so blessed a state? The Blood of the Lamb, by virtue of which the key of obedience has lost its rust, so that, by the virtue of the Blood, it has been able to unlock the door. Oh, fools and madmen, delay no longer to come out of the mud of impurity, for you seem like pigs to wallow in the mire of your own lust! Abandon the injustice, murders, hatreds, rancors, detractions, murmurings, false judgments, and cruelty, with which you use your neighbors, your thefts and treacheries, and the disordinate pleasures and delights of the world; cut off the horns of pride, by which amputation you will extinguish the hatred which is in your heart against your neighbors. Compare the injuries which you do to Me and to your neighbor with those done to you, and you will see that those done to you are but trifles. You will see that remaining in hatred you injure Me by transgressing My precept, and you also injure the object of your hate, for you deprive him of your love, whereas you have been commanded to love Me above everything, and your neighbor as yourself. No gloss has been put upon these words as if it should have been said, if your neighbor injures you do not love him; but they are to be taken naturally and simply, as they were said to you by My Truth, who Himself literally observed this rule. Literally also should you observe it, and if you do not you will injure your own soul, depriving it of the life of grace. Take, oh take, then, the key of obedience with the light of faith, walk no longer in such darkness or cold, but observe obedience in the fire of love, so that you may taste eternal life together with the other observers of the law."

Of those who have such love for obedience that they do not remain content with the general obedience of precepts, but take on themselves a particular obedience.

"**T**HREE are some, My dearest daughter, in whom the sweet and amorous fire of love towards obedience burns so high (which fire of love cannot exist without hatred of self-love, so that when the fire increases so does this self-hatred), that they are not content to observe the precepts of the Law with a general obedience as you are all obliged to do if you will have life and not death, but take upon themselves a particular obedience, following the greatest perfection, so that they become observers of the counsels both in deed and in thought. Such as these wish to bind themselves more tightly through self-hatred, and in order to restrain in everything their own will. They either place themselves under the yoke of obedience in holy religion, or, without entering religion, they bind themselves to some creature, submitting their will to his, so as more expeditiously to unlock the door of Heaven. These are they, as I have told thee, who have chosen the most perfect obedience. I have already spoken to thee of obedience in general, and as I know it to be thy will that I should speak to thee of this particular and most perfect obedience, I will now relate to thee somewhat of this second kind, which is not divided from the first, but is more perfect, for, as I have already told thee, these two kinds of obedience are so closely united together that they cannot be separated. I have told thee where general obedience is to be found and whence it proceeds, and the cause of its loss. Now I will speak to thee of this particular obedience, not altering, however, the fundamental principle of the virtue."

How a soul advances from general to particular obedience; and of the excellence of the religious

“THE soul who with love has submitted to the yoke of obedience, to the Commandments, following the doctrine of My truth virtuously exercising herself, as has been said, in this general kind of obedience will advance to the second kind by means of the same light which brought her to the first, for by the light of the most Holy Faith she would have learnt, in the Blood of the humble Lamb, My truth—the ineffable love which I have for her, and her own fragility, which cannot respond to Me with due perfection. So she wanders, seeking by that light in what place and in what way she can pay her debt, trampling on her own fragility, and restraining her own will. Enlightened in her search by faith, she finds the place—namely, holy religion—which has been founded by the Holy Spirit, appointed as the ship to receive souls who wish to hasten to perfection, and to bring them to the port of salvation. The Captain of this ship is the Holy Spirit, who never fails in Himself through the defects of any of His religious subjects who may transgress the rule of the Order. The ship itself cannot be damaged, but only the offender. It is true that the mistake of the steersman may send her down into the billows, and these are wicked pastors and prelates appointed by the Master of the ship. The ship herself is so delightful that thy tongue could not narrate it. I say, then, that the soul, on fire with desire and a holy self-hatred, having found her place by the light of faith, enters there as one dead, if she is truly obedient; that is to say, if she has perfectly observed general obedience. And even if she should be imperfect when she enters, it does not follow that she cannot attain perfection. On the contrary, she attains it by exercising herself in the virtue of obedience; indeed, most of those who enter are imperfect. There are some who enter already in perfection, others in the childhood of virtue, others through fear, others through penance, others through allurements, everything depends on whether after they have entered they exercise themselves in virtue, and persevere till death, for no true judgment can be made on a person’s entrance into religion, but only on their perseverance, for many have appeared to be perfect who have afterwards turned back, or remained in the order with much imperfection, so that, as I have said, the act of entrance into this ship ordained by Me, who call men in different ways, does not supply material for a real judgment, but only the love of those who persevere therein with true obedience. This ship is rich, so that there is no need for the subject to think about his necessities either temporal or spiritual, for if he is truly obedient, and observes his order, he will be provided for by his Master, who is the Holy Spirit, as I told thee when I spoke to thee of My providence, saying that though thy servants might be poor, they were never beggars. No more are these, for they find everything they need, and those who observe this order find this to be indeed true. Wherefore, see that in the days when the religious orders lived virtuously, blossoming with true poverty and fraternal charity, their temporal substance never failed them, but they had more than their needs demanded. But because the stench of self-love has entered and caused each to keep his private possessions and to fail in obedience, their temporal substance has failed, and the more they possess to the greater destitution do they come. It is just that even in the smallest matters they should experience the fruit of disobedience, for had they been obedient and observed the vow of poverty, each would not have taken his own, and lived privately. See the riches of these holy Rules, so thoughtfully and luminously appointed by those who were temples of the Holy Spirit. See with what judgment Benedict ordered his ship; see with what perfection and order of poverty Francis ordered his ship, decked with the pearls of virtue, steering it in the way of lofty perfection, being the first to give his Order for spouse, true and holy poverty, whom he had chosen for himself, embracing self-contempt and self-hatred, not desiring to please any creature but only My Will; desiring rather to be thought vile by the world, macerating his body and slaying his will, clothing himself in insults, sufferings, and jibes, for love of the humble Lamb, with whom he was fastened and nailed to the cross by love, so that by a singular grace there appeared in his body the very wounds of My Truth, showing in the vessel of his body that which was in the love of his soul, so he prepared the way.

“But thou wilt say, ‘Are not all the other religious Orders equally founded on this point?’ Yes, but though they are all founded on it, in no other is this the principal foundation; as with the virtues, though all the virtues draw their life from charity, nevertheless, as I explained to thee in another place, one virtue belongs especially to one man, and another to another, and yet they all remain in charity, so with the principal foundation of the religious Orders. Poverty belonged especially to My poor man Francis, who placed the principal foundation of his Order in love for this poverty, and made it very strict for those who were perfect, for the few and the good, not for the majority. I say few because they are not many who choose this perfection, though now through their sins they are multiplied in numbers and deficient in virtue, not through defect of the ship, but through disobedient subjects and wicked rulers. Now look at the ship of thy father Dominic, My beloved son: he ordered it most perfectly, wishing that his sons should apply themselves only to My honor and the salvation of souls, with the light of science, which light he laid as his principal foundation, not, however, on that account, being deprived of true and voluntary poverty, but having it also. And as a sign that he had it truly, and that the contrary displeased him, he left as an heirloom to his sons his curse and Mine, if they should hold any possessions, either privately or in community, as a sign that he had chosen for his spouse Queen Poverty. But for his more immediate and personal object he took the light of science in order to extirpate the errors which had arisen in his time, thus taking on him the office of My Only-begotten Son, the Word. Rightly he appeared as an apostle in the world, and sowed the seed of My Word with much truth and light, dissipating darkness and giving light. He was a light which I gave the world by means of Mary, placed in the mystical body of the Holy Church as an extirpator of heresies. Why do I say by means of Mary? Because Mary gave him his habit—this office was committed to her by My goodness. At what

table does he feed his sons with the light of science? At the table of the Cross, which is the table of holy desire, when souls are consumed for My honor. Dominic does not wish his sons to apply themselves to anything, but remaining at this table, there to seek with the light of science, the glory and praise of My Name alone, and the salvation of souls. And in order that they might do nothing else, he chose poverty for them, so that they might not have the care of temporal things. It is true that some failed in faith, fearing that they would not be provided for, but he, never. Being clothed in faith, and hoping with firm confidence in My providence, he wishes his sons to observe obedience and do their duty, and since impure living obscures the eye of the intellect, and not only the eye of the intellect, but also of the body, he does not wish them to obscure their physical light with which they may more perfectly obtain the light of science; wherefore he imposed on them the third vow of continence, and wishes that all should observe it, with true and perfect obedience, although today it is badly observed. They also prevent the light of science with the darkness of pride, not that this light can be darkened in itself, but only in their souls, for, where pride is, there can be no obedience. I have already told thee that a man's humility is in proportion to his obedience, and his obedience to his humility, and similarly, when he transgresses the vow of obedience, it rarely happens that he does not also transgress the vow of continence, either in thought or deed; so that he has rigged his ship with the three ropes of obedience, continence, and true poverty; he made it a royal ship, not obliging his subjects under pain of mortal sin, and illuminated by Me the true Light, he provided for those who should be less perfect, for though all who observe the Order are perfect in kind, yet one possesses a higher degree of perfection than another, yet all perfect or imperfect live well in this ship. He allied himself with My truth, showing that he *did not desire the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live*. Wherefore his religion is a delightful garden, broad and joyous and fragrant, but the wretches who do not observe the Order, but transgress its vows, have turned it into a desert and defiled it with their scanty virtue and light of science, though they are nourished at its breast. I do not say that the Order itself is in this condition, for it still possesses every delight, but in the beginning its subjects were not as they are now, but blooming flowers, and men of great perfection. Each seemed to be another St. Paul, their eyes so illuminated that the darkness of error was dissipated by their glance. Look at My glorious Thomas, who gazed with the gentle eye of his intellect at My Truth, whereby he acquired supernatural light and science infused by grace, for he obtained it rather by means of prayer than by human study. He was a brilliant light, illuminating his Order and the mystical body of the Holy Church, dissipating the clouds of heresy. Look at My Peter, virgin and martyr, who by his blood gave light among the darkness of many heresies, and the heretics hated him so that at last they took his life; yet while he lived he applied himself to nothing but prayer, preaching, and disputation with heretics, hearing Confessions, announcing the truth, and spreading the Faith without any fear, to such an extent that he not only confessed it in his life but even at the moment of his death, for when he was at the last extremity, having neither voice nor ink left, having received his death-blow, he dipped his finger in his blood, and this glorious martyr, having not paper on which to write, leaned over, confessing the Faith, and wrote the Credo on the ground. His heart burnt in the furnace of My charity, so that he never slackened his pace nor turned his head back, though he knew that he was to die, for I had revealed to him his death, but like a true knight he fearlessly came forth on to the battlefield; and I could tell thee the same of many others, who though they did not actually experience martyrdom, were martyrs in will like Dominic; great laborers were these sent by My Father to labor in His vineyard to extirpate the thorns of vice, planting the virtues in their stead. Of a truth Dominic and Francis were two columns of the Holy Church. Francis with the poverty which was specially his own, as has been said, and Dominic with his learning."

Of the excellence of the obedient, and of the misery of the disobedient members of the religious Orders.

“**N**Ow that places suitable for obedience have been found, namely, these ships commanded by the Holy Spirit through the medium of their superiors, for, as I told thee, the Holy Spirit is the true Master of these ships, which are built in the light of the most Holy Faith by those who have the light to know that My clemency, the Holy Spirit, will steer them, and having thus shown thee the place of obedience and its perfection, I will speak to thee of the obedience and of the disobedience of those who travel in such a ship, speaking of all together and not of one ship—that is, one Order—in particular, showing thee the sin of the disobedient and the virtue of the obedient, so that a man may better know the one by contrast with the other, and how he should walk if he would enter the ship of a religious Order. How should he walk who wishes to enter this state of perfect and particular obedience? With the light of holy faith, by which he will know that he must slay his self-will with the knife of hatred of every sensual passion, taking the spouse which charity gives him, together with her sister. The spouse is true and prompt obedience, and the sister, patience; and he must also take the nurse of humility, for without this nurse obedience would perish of hunger, for obedience soon dies in a soul deprived of this little virtue of humility.

“Humility is not alone but has the handmaid of contempt of self and of the world, which causes the soul to hold herself vile, and not to desire honor but shame. Thus dead to himself, should he who is old enough enter the ship of a religious Order, but however he may enter it (for I have told thee that I call souls in diverse ways), he should acquire and preserve this affection, hurrying generously to seize the key of the obedience of his Order, which will open the little door which is in the panel of the door of Heaven. Such as these have undertaken to open the little door, doing without the great key of general

obedience, which opens the door of Heaven, as I have said to thee. They have taken a little key, passing through a low and narrow opening in the great door. This small door is part of the great door, as thou mayest see in any real door. They should keep this key when they have got it, and not throw it away. And because the truly obedient have seen with the light of faith that they will never be able to pass through this little door with the load of their riches and the weight of their own will without great fatigue and without losing their life, and that they cannot walk with head erect without breaking their neck, whether they wish to or not, they cast from them the load of their riches, and of their own will observing the vow of voluntary poverty, refusing to possess anything, for they see by the light of faith to what ruin they would come if they transgressed obedience, and the vow of poverty which they promised to keep. The disobedient walk in pride, holding their heads erect, and if sometimes it suits their convenience to obey they do not incline their heads with humility, but proudly do so, because they must, which force breaks the neck of their will, for they fulfill their obedience with hatred of their Order and of their superior. Little by little they are ruined on another point, for they transgress the vow of continence, for he who does not constrain his appetite or strip himself of temporal substance makes many relations and finds plenty of friends who love him for their own profit. From these relations they go on to close intimacies, their body they tend luxuriously, for being without either the nurse of humility or her sister, self-contempt, they live in their own pleasure richly and delicately, not like religious but like nobles, without watching or prayer. This and many other things happen to them because they have money to spend, for if they had it not they could not spend it. They fall into mental and physical impurity, for if sometimes from shame or through lack of means they abstain physically, they indulge themselves mentally, for it is impossible for a man with many worldly relations, of delicate habits and disordinate greediness, who watches not nor prays, to preserve his mind pure. Wherefore the perfectly obedient man sees from afar with the light of holy faith the evil and the loss which would come to him from temporal possessions and from walking weighed down by his own will; he also sees that he is obliged to pass by this narrow door, and that in such a state he would die before he would be able to pass it, having no key of obedience wherewith to open it, for as I said to thee, he is obliged to pass through it. Wherefore it is that whether he will or no he should not leave the ship of the Order, but should walk the narrow path of obedience to his superior.

"Wherefore the perfectly obedient man rises above himself and his own sensuality, and rising above his own feelings with living faith, places self-hatred as servant in the house of his soul to drive out the enemy of self-love, for he does not wish that his spouse, Obedience, given him with the light of faith by her mother, Charity, should be offended; so he drives out the enemy and puts in his place the nurse and companions of his spouse.

"The love of obedience places in the house of his soul the lovers of his spouse, Obedience, who are the true and royal virtues, the customs and observances of his Order, so that this sweet spouse enters his soul with her sister, Patience, and her nurse, Humility, together with Self-contempt and Self-hatred, and when she has entered she possesses peace and quiet, for her enemies have been exiled. She dwells in the garden of true continence, with the sun of intellectual light shining in, the eye of holy faith fixed on the object of My truth, for her object is My truth, and the fire of love with which she observes the rules of the Order, warms all her servants and companions.

"Who are her enemies who have been expelled? The chief is self-love, producing pride, the enemy of humility and charity. Impatience is the enemy of patience, disobedience of true obedience, infidelity of faith, presumption and self-confidence do not accord with the true hope which the soul should have in Me; injustice cannot be conformed to justice, nor imprudence to prudence, nor intemperance to temperance, nor the transgression of the commandments of the Order to perfect observance of them, nor the wicked conversation of those who live in sin to the good conversation of My servants. These are a man's enemies, causing him to leave the good customs and traditions of his Order. He has also those other cruel enemies: anger, which wars against his benevolence; cruelty, against his kindness; wrath, against his benignity; hatred of virtue, against the love of virtue; impurity, against chastity; negligence, against solicitude; ignorance, against knowledge; and sloth against watchfulness and continued prayer.

"And since he knew by the light of faith that all these were his enemies who would defile his spouse, holy obedience, he appointed hatred to drive them out, and love to replace them with her friends. Wherefore with the knife of hatred he slew his perverse self-will, who, nourished by self-love, gave life to all these enemies of true obedience, and having cut off the source by which all the others are preserved in life, he remains free and in peace without any war, for there is no one to make war on him—for the soul has cut off from herself that which kept her in bitterness and in sadness. What makes war on obedience? Injuries? No, for the obedient man is patient, patience being the sister of obedience. The weight of the observances of the Order? No, for obedience causes him to fulfill them. Does the weight of obedience give him pain? No, for he has trampled on his own will, and does not care to examine or judge the will of his superior, for with the light of faith he sees My Will in him, believing truly that My clemency causes him to command according to the needs of his subject's salvation. Is he disgusted and angry at having to perform the humble duties of the Order or to endure the mockeries, reproofs, jibes, and insults which are often cast at him, or to be held at little worth? No, for he has conceived love for self-contempt and self-hatred. Wherefore he rejoices with patience, exulting with delight and joy in the company of his spouse, true obedience, for the only thing which saddens him is to see Me, his Creator, offended. His conversation is with those who truly fear Me, and if he should converse with those who are separated from My Will, it is not in order to conform himself to their sins, but to draw them out of their

misery, for through the brotherly love which he has in his heart towards them he would like to give them the good which he possesses, seeing that more glory and praise would be given to My Name by many observing aright their Order than by him doing so alone. Wherefore he endeavors to convert religious and seculars by his words and by prayer, and by every means by which he can draw them out of the darkness of mortal sin. Thus the conversations of a truly obedient man are good and perfect, whether they be with just men or with sinners, through his rightly ordered love and the breadth of his charity. Of his cell he makes a heaven, delighting there to converse with Me, his supreme and eternal Father, with the affection of love, flying idleness with humble and continual prayer, and when, through the illusion of the devil, thoughts come crowding into his cell, he does not sit down on the bed of negligence embracing idleness, nor care to examine by reason the thoughts or opinions of his heart, but he flies sloth, rising above himself and his senses with hatred and true humility, patiently enduring the weariness which he feels in his mind, and resisting by watching and humble prayer, fixing the eye of his intellect on Me, and seeing with the light of faith that I am his helper, and both can and will help him, and open to him the eyes of My kindness, and that it is I who permit this suffering in order that he may be more eager to fly himself and come to Me. And if it should seem to him that on account of his great weariness and the darkness of his mind, mental prayer is impossible, he recites vocal prayers, or busies himself with some corporal exercises, so that by these means he may avoid idleness. He looks at Me with the light which I give him through love, which draws forth true humility, for he deems himself unworthy of the peace and quiet of mind of My other servants, but rather worthy of pain, for he despises himself in his own mind with hatred and self-reproach, thinking that he can never endure enough pain, for neither his hope nor My providence fail him, but with faith and the key of obedience he passes over this stormy sea in the ship of his Order, dwelling thus in his cell as has been said, and avoiding idleness.

"The obedient man wishes to be the first to enter choir and the last to leave it, and when he sees a brother more obedient than himself he regards him in his eagerness with a holy envy, stealing from him the virtue in which he excels, not wishing, however, that his brother should have less thereof, for if he wished this he would be separated from brotherly love. The obedient man does not leave the refectory, but visits it continually and delights in being at table with the poor. And as a sign that he delights therein, and so as to have no reason to remain without, he has abandoned his temporal substance, observing so perfectly the vow of poverty that he blames himself for considering even the necessities of his body. His cell is full of the odor of poverty, and not of clothes; he has no fear that thieves will come to rob him, or that rust or moths will corrupt his garments; and if anything is given to him, he does not think of laying it by for his own use, but freely shares it with his brethren, not thinking of the morrow, but rather depriving himself today of what he needs, thinking only of the Kingdom of Heaven and how he may best observe true obedience.

"And in order that he may better keep to the path of humility, he submits to small and great, to poor and rich, and becomes the servant of all, never refusing labor, but serving all with charity. The obedient man does not wish to fulfill his obedience in his own way, or to choose his time or place, but prefers the way of his Order and of his superior. All this the truly and perfectly obedient man does without pain and weariness of mind. He passes with this key in his hand through the narrow door of the Order, easily and without violence, because he observes the vows of poverty, true obedience, and continence, having abandoned the heights of pride, and bowed his head to obedience through humility. He does not break his neck through impatience, but is patient with fortitude and enduring perseverance, the friends of obedience. Thus he passes by the assaults of the devils, mortifying and macerating his flesh, stripping it bare of all pleasures and delights and clothing it with the labors of the Order in a faith which despises nothing, for as a child who does not remember the blows and injuries inflicted on him by his father, so this child of the spirit does not remember the injuries, pains, or blows inflicted on him by his superior in the Order, but calling him humbly, turns to him without anger, hatred, or rancor, but with meekness and benevolence.

"These are those little ones of whom My Truth spoke to the disciples, who were contending among themselves which of them should be the greater, for calling a child, He said: '*Allow the little ones to come to Me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven to be; whoever will not humble himself like this child* (that is, who will not keep this childlike condition), *shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. For he who humbles himself, dearest daughter, will be exalted, and he who exalts himself will be humbled,*' which also was said to you by My Truth. Justly, therefore, are these humble little ones, humiliated and subjected through love, with true and holy obedience, who do not kick against the goad of their Order or superior, exalted by Me, the supreme and eternal Father, with the true citizens of the blessed life, when they are rewarded for all their labors, and in this life also do they taste Eternal Life."

How the truly obedient receive a hundredfold for one, and also Eternal Life; and what is meant by this one, and this hundredfold.

"IN them is fulfilled the saying of the sweet and amorous Word, My Only-begotten Son, in the gospel when He replied to Peter's demand, '*Master, we have left everything for thy love's sake, and have followed Thee, what wilt Thou give us?*' My Truth replied, '*I will give you a hundredfold for one, and you shall possess eternal life.*' As if My Truth had wished to say, '*Thou hast done well, Peter, for in no other way coudest thou follow Me. And I, in this life, will give thee a hundredfold for one.*' And what is this hundredfold, beloved daughter, besides which the Apostle obtained Eternal Life? To what did My

Truth refer? To temporal substance?

“Properly speaking, no. Do I not, however, often cause one who gives alms to multiply in temporal goods? In return for what do I do this? In return for the gift of his own will. This is the one for which I repay him a hundredfold. What is the meaning of the number a hundred? A hundred is a perfect number, and cannot be added to except by recommencing from the first. So charity is the most perfect of all the virtues, so perfect that no higher virtue can be attained except by recommencing at the beginning of self-knowledge, and thus increasing many hundredfold in merit; but you always necessarily arrive at the number one hundred. This is that hundredfold which is given to those who have given Me the unit of their own will, both in general obedience, and in the particular obedience of the religious life. And in addition to this hundred you also possess Eternal Life, for charity alone enters into Eternal Life, like a mistress bringing with her the fruit of all the other virtues, while they remain outside, bringing their fruit, I say, into Me, the Eternal Life, in whom the obedient taste Eternal Life. It is not by faith that they taste Eternal Life, for they experience in its essence that which they have believed through faith; nor by hope, for they possess that for which they had hoped, and so with all the other virtues, Queen Charity alone enters and possesses Me, her possessor. See, therefore, that these little ones receive a hundredfold for one, and also Eternal Life, for here they receive the fire of divine charity figured by the number of a hundred (as has been said). And because they have received this hundredfold from Me, they possess a wonderful and hearty joy, for there is no sadness in charity, but the joy of it makes the heart large and generous, not narrow or double. A soul wounded by this sweet arrow does not appear one thing in face and tongue while her heart is different. She does not serve, or act towards her neighbor with dissembling and ambition, because charity is an open book to be read by all. Wherefore the soul who possesses charity never falls into trouble, or the affliction of sadness, or jars with obedience, but remains obedient until death.”

Of the perversities, miseries, and labors of the disobedient man; and of the miserable fruits which proceed from disobedience.

“CONTRARIWISE, a wicked disobedient man dwells in the ship of a religious Order with so much pain to himself and others, that in this life he tastes the earnest of Hell, he remains always in sadness and confusion of mind, tormented by the sting of conscience, with hatred of his Order and superior, insupportable to himself. What a terrible thing it is, My daughter, to see one who has once taken the key of obedience of a religious Order, living in disobedience, to which he has made himself a slave, for of disobedience he has made his mistress with her companion impatience, nourished by pride, and his own pleasure, which pride (as has been said) issues from self-love. For him everything is the contrary to what it would be for the obedient man. For how can this wretch be in any other state than suffering, for he is deprived of charity, he is obliged by force to incline the neck of his own will, and pride keeps it erect, all his desires are in discord with the will of the Order. The Order commands obedience, and he loves disobedience; the Order commands voluntary poverty, and he avoids it, possessing and acquiring riches; the Order commands continence and purity, and he desires lewdness. By transgressing these three vows, My daughter, a religious comes to ruin, and falls into so many miseries, that his aspect is no longer that of a religious but of an incarnate devil, as in another place I related to thee at greater length. I will, however, tell thee something now of their delusion, and of the fruit which they obtained by disobedience to the commendation and exhortation of obedience. This wretched man is deluded by his self-love, because the eye of his intellect is fixed, with a dead faith, on pleasing his self-will, and on things of the world. He left the world in body, but remained there in his affections, and because obedience seems wearisome to him he wishes to disobey in order to avoid weariness; whereby he arrives at the greatest weariness of all, for he is obliged to obey either by force or by love, and it would have been better and less wearisome to have obeyed by love than without it. Oh, how deluded he is, and no one else deceives him but himself! Wishing to please himself he only gives himself displeasure, for the actions which he will have to do, through the obedience imposed on him, do not please him. He wishes to enjoy delights and make this life his eternity, but the Order wishes him to be a pilgrim, and continually proves it to him; for when he is in a nice pleasant resting place, where he would like to remain for the pleasures and delights he finds there, he is transferred elsewhere, and the change gives him pain, for his will was active against his obedience, and yet he is obliged to endure the discipline and labors of the Order, and thus remains in continual torment. See, therefore, how he deludes himself; for, wishing to fly pain, he on the contrary falls into it, for his blindness does not let him know the road of true obedience—which is a road of truth founded by the obedient Lamb, My Only-begotten Son, who removed pain from it—so that he walks by the road of lies, believing that he will find delight there, but finding on the contrary pain and bitterness. Who is his guide? Self-love, that is his own passion for disobedience. Such a man thinks like a fool to navigate this tempestuous sea, with the strength of his own arms, trusting in his own miserable knowledge, and will not navigate it in the arms of his Order, and of his superior. Such a one is indeed in the ship of the Order in body, and not in mind; he has quitted it in desire, not observing the regulations or customs of the Order, nor the three vows which he promised to observe at the time of his Profession; he swims in the tempestuous sea, tossed to and fro by contrary winds, fastened only to the ship by his clothes, wearing the religious habit on his body but not on his heart. Such a one is no friar, but a masquerader, a man only in appearance. His life is lower than an animal’s, and he does not see that he labors more swimming with his arms, than the good religious in the ship, or that he is in

danger of eternal death; for if his clothes should be suddenly torn from the ship, which will happen at the moment of death, he will have no remedy. No, he does not see, for he has darkened his light with the cloud of self-love, whence has come his disobedience, which prevents him seeing his misery, wherefore he miserably deceives himself. What fruit is produced by this wretched tree?

“The fruit of death, because the root of his affection is planted in pride, which he has drawn from self-love. Wherefore everything that issues from this root—flowers, leaves, and fruit—is corrupt, and the three boughs of this tree, which are obedience, poverty, and continence, which spring from the foot of the tree; that is, his affections are corrupted. The leaves produced by this tree, which are his words, are so corrupt that they would be out of place in the mouth of a ribald secular; and if he have to preach My doctrine, he does so in polished terms, not simply, as one who should feed souls with the seed of My Word, but with eloquent language. Look at the stinking flowers of this tree, which are his diverse and various thoughts, which he voluntarily welcomes with delight and pleasure, not flying the occasions of them, but rather seeking them in order to be able to accomplish a sinful act, the which is the fruit which kills him, depriving him of the light of grace, and giving him eternal death. And what stench comes from this fruit, sprung from the flowers of the tree? The stench of disobedience, for, in the secret of his heart, he wishes to examine and judge unfaithfully his superior’s will; a stench of impurity, for he takes delight in many foul conversations, wretchedly tempting his penitents.

“Wretch that thou art, dost thou not see that under the color of devotion thou concealest a troop of children? This comes from thy disobedience. Thou hast not chosen the virtues for thy children as does the truly obedient religious; thou strivest to deceive thy superior when thou seest that he denies thee something which thy perverse will desires, using the leaves of smooth or rough words, speaking irreverently and reproving him. Thou canst not endure thy brother, nor even the smallest word and reproof which he may make to thee, but in such a case thou immediately bringest forth the poisoned fruit of anger and hatred against him, judging that to be done to thy hurt which was done for thy good, and thus taking scandal, thy soul and body living in pain. Why has thy brother displeased thee? Because thou livest for thy own sensual pleasure, thou fliest thy cell as if it were a prison, for thou hast abandoned the cell of self-knowledge, and thus fallen into disobedience, wherefore thou canst not remain in thy material cell. Thou wilt not appear in the refectory against thy will whilst thou hast anything to spend; when thou hast nothing left necessity takes thee there.

“Therefore the obedient have done well, who have chosen to observe their vow of poverty, so that they have nothing to spend, and therefore are not led away from the sweet table of the refectory, where obedience nourishes both body and soul in peace and quiet. The obedient religious does not think of laying a table, or of providing food for himself like this wretched man, to whose taste it is painful to eat in the refectory, wherefore he avoids it; he is always the last to enter the choir, and the first to leave it; with his lips he approaches Me, with his heart he is far from Me. He gladly escapes from the chapter-house when he can through fear of penance. When he is obliged to be there, he is covered with shame and confusion for the faults which he felt it no shame to commit. What is the cause of this? Disobedience. He does not watch in prayer, and not only does he omit mental prayer, but even the Divine Office to which he is obliged. He has no fraternal charity, because he loves no one but himself, and that not with a reasonable but with a bestial love. So great are the evils which fall on the disobedient; so many are the fruits of sorrow which he produces, that thy tongue could not relate them. Oh, disobedience, which deprives the soul of the light of obedience, destroying peace, and giving war! Disobedience destroys life and gives death, drawing the religious out of the ship of the observance of his Order, to drown him in the sea, making him swim in the strength of his own arms, and not repose on those of the Order. Disobedience clothes him with every misery, causes him to die of hunger, taking away from him the food of the merit of obedience, it gives him continual bitterness, depriving him of every sweetness and good, causing him to dwell with every evil. In life it gives him the earnest of cruel torments to endure, and if he does not amend before his clothes are loosened from the ship at death, disobedience will lead the soul to eternal damnation, together with the devils who fell from Heaven, because they rebelled against Me. In the same way hast thou, oh disobedient man, having rebelled against obedience and cast from thee the key which would have opened the door of Heaven, opened instead the door of Hell with the key of disobedience.”

How God does not reward merit according to the labor of the obedient, nor according to the length of time which it takes, but according to the love and promptitude of the truly obedient; and of the miracles which God has performed by means of this virtue; and of discretion in obedience, and of the works and reward of the truly obedient man.

“I HAVE appointed you all to labor in the vineyard of obedience in different ways, and every man will receive a price, according to the measure of his love, and not according to the work he does, or the length of time for which he works, that is to say, that he who comes early will not have more than he who comes late, as My Truth told you in the holy Gospel by the example of those who were standing idle and were sent by the lord of the vineyard to labor; for he gave as much to those who went at dawn, as to those who went at Prime or at Terce, and those who went at Sext, at None, and even at Vespers, received as much as the first: My Truth showing you in this way that you are rewarded not according to time or work, but according to

the measure of your love. Many are placed in their childhood to work in the vineyard; some enter later in life, and others in old age; sometimes these latter labor with such fire of love, seeing the shortness of the time, that they rejoin those who entered in their childhood, because they have advanced but slowly. By love of obedience, then, does the soul receive her merit, filling the vessel of her heart in Me, the Sea Pacific. There are many whose obedience is so prompt, and has become, as it were, so incarnate in them, that not only do they wish to see reason in what is ordered them by their superior, but they hardly wait until the word is out of his mouth, for with the light of faith they understand his intention. Wherefore the truly obedient man obeys rather the intention than the word, judging that the will of his superior is fixed in My Will, and that therefore his command comes from My dispensation, and from My Will, wherefore I say to thee that he rather obeys the intention than the word. He also obeys the word, having first spiritually obeyed in affection his superior's will, seeing and judging it by the light of faith to be Mine. This is well shown in the lives of the Fathers, where you read of a religious, who at once obeyed in his affection the command of his superior, commencing to write the letter "o," though he had not space to finish it; wherefore to show how pleasing his prompt obedience was to Me, My clemency gave him a proof by writing the other half of the letter in gold. This glorious virtue is so pleasing to Me, that to no other have I given so many miraculous signs and testimonies, for it proceeds from the height of faith.

"In order to show how pleasing it is to Me, the earth obeys this virtue, the animals obey it—water grows solid under the feet of the obedient man. And as for the obedience of the earth, thou rememberest having read of that disciple who, being given a dry stick by his abbot, and being ordered by obedience to plant it in the earth and water it every day, did not proceed to ask how could it possibly do any good, but, without inquiring about possibilities, he fulfilled his obedience in such virtue of faith that the dry wood brought forth leaves and fruits, as a sign that that soul had risen from the dryness of disobedience, and, covered by the green leaves of virtue, had brought forth the fruit of obedience, wherefore the fruit of this tree was called by the holy Fathers the fruit of obedience. Thou wilt also find that animals obey the obedient man; for a certain disciple, commanded by obedience, through his purity and virtue caught a dragon and brought it to his abbot, but the abbot, like a true physician of the soul, in order that he might not be tossed about by the wind of vainglory, and to prove his patience, sent him away with harsh words, saying: 'Beast that thou art, thou hast brought along another beast with thyself.' And as to fire, thou hast read in the Holy Scripture that many were placed in the fire, rather than transgress My obedience, and, at My command were not hurt by it. This was the case of the three children, who remained happily in the furnace—and of many others of whom I could tell thee. The water bore up Maurus who had been sent by obedience to save a drowning disciple; he did not think of himself, but thought only with the light of faith of how to fulfill the command of his superior, and so walked upon the water as if he had been on dry land, and so saved the disciple. In everything, if thou openest the eye of the intellect, thou wilt find shown forth the excellence of this virtue. Everything else should be abandoned for the sake of obedience. If thou wert lifted up in such contemplation and union of mind with Me, that thy body was raised from the earth, and an obedience were imposed on thee (speaking generally, and not in a particular case, which cannot give a law), thou oughtest, if possible, to force thyself to arise, to fulfill the obedience imposed on thee, though thou shouldest never leave prayer, except for necessity, charity, or obedience. I say this in order that thou mayest see how prompt I wish the obedience of My servants to be, and how pleasing it is to Me. Everything that the obedient man does is a source of merit to him. If he eats, obedience is his food; if he sleeps, his dreams are obedience; if he walks, if he remains still, if he fasts, if he watches—everything that he does is obedience; if he serve his neighbor, it is obedience that he serves. How is he guided in the choir, in the refectory, or his cell? By obedience, with the light of the most Holy Faith, with which light he has slain and cast from him his humbled self-will, and abandoned himself with self-hatred to the arms of his Order and superior. Reposing with obedience in the ship, allowing himself to be guided by his superior, he has navigated the tempestuous sea of this life, with calm and serene mind and tranquillity of heart, because obedience and faith have taken all darkness from him; he remains strong and firm, having lost all weakness and fear, having destroyed his own will, from which comes all feebleness and disordinate fear. And what is the food of this spouse obedience? She feeds on knowledge of self, and of Me, knowing her own non-existence and sinfulness, and knowing that I am He who is, thus partaking of and knowing My Truth in the Incarnate Word. What does she drink? The Blood, in which the Word has shown her, My Truth, and the ineffable love which I have for her, and the obedience imposed on Him by Me, His Eternal Father, so she becomes inebriated with the love and obedience of the Word, losing herself and her own opinions and knowledge, and possessing Me by grace, tasting Me by love, with the light of faith in holy obedience.

"The obedient man speaks words of peace all his life, and at his death receives that which was promised him at his death by his superior, that is to say, Eternal Life, the vision of peace, and of supreme and eternal tranquillity and rest, the inestimable good which no one can value or understand, for, being the infinite good, it cannot be understood by anything smaller than itself, like a vessel, which, dipped into the sea, does not comprehend the whole sea, but only that quantity which it contains. The sea alone contains itself. So I, the Sea Pacific, am He who alone can comprehend and value Myself truly. And in My own estimate and comprehension of Myself I rejoice, and this joy, the good which I have in Myself, I share with you, and with all, according to the measure of each. I do not leave you empty, but fill you, giving you perfect beatitude; each man comprehends and knows My goodness in the measure in which it is given to him. Thus, then, the obedient man, with the light of faith in the truth burning in the furnace of charity, anointed with humility, inebriated with the Blood, in company with his sister

patience, and with self-contempt, fortitude, and enduring perseverance, and all the other virtues (that is, with the fruit of the virtues), receives his end from Me, his Creator."

This is a brief repetition of the entire book.

"**I**HAVE now, oh dearest and best beloved daughter, satisfied from the beginning to the end thy desire concerning obedience.

"If thou rememberest well, thou didst make four petitions of Me with anxious desire, or rather I caused thee to make them in order to increase the fire of My love in thy soul: one for thyself, which I have satisfied, illuminating thee with My truth, and showing thee how thou mayest know this truth which thou didst desire to know; explaining to thee how thou mightest come to the knowledge of it through the knowledge of thyself and Me, through the light of faith. The second request thou didst make of Me was that I should do mercy to the world. In the third thou didst pray for the mystical body of the Holy Church, that I would remove darkness and persecutions from it, punishing its iniquities at thy own desire in thy person. As to this I explained that no penalty inflicted in finite time can satisfy for a sin committed against Me, the Infinite Good, unless it is united with the desire of the soul and contrition of the heart. How this is to be done I have explained to thee. I have also told thee that I wish to do mercy to the world, proving to thee that mercy is My special attribute, for through the mercy and the inestimable love which I had for man, I sent to the earth the Word, My Only-begotten Son, whom, that thou mightest understand things quite clearly, I represented to thee under the figure of a Bridge, reaching from earth to Heaven, through the union of My divinity with your human nature.

"I also showed thee, to give thee further light concerning My truth, how this Bridge is built on three steps; that is, on the three powers of the soul. These three steps I also represented to thee, as thou knowest, under figures of thy body—the feet, the side, and the mouth—by which I also figured three states of soul—the imperfect state, the perfect state, and the most perfect state, in which the soul arrives at the excellence of unitive love. I have shown thee clearly in each state the means of cutting away imperfection and reaching perfection, and how the soul may know by which road she is walking and of the hidden delusions of the devil and of spiritual self-love. Speaking of these three states I have also spoken of the three judgments which My clemency delivers—one in this life, the second at death on those who die in mortal sin without hope, of whom I told thee that they went under the Bridge by the devil's road, when I spoke to thee of their wretchedness. And the third is that of the last and universal judgment. And I who told thee somewhat of the suffering of the damned and the glory of the Blessed, when all shall have reassumed their bodies given by Me, also promised thee, and now again I repeat my promise, that through the long endurance of My servants I will reform My spouse. Wherefore I invite thee to endure, Myself lamenting with thee over her iniquities. And I have shown thee the excellence of the ministers I have given her, and the reverence in which I wish seculars to hold them, showing thee the reason why their reverence towards My ministers should not diminish on account of the sins of the latter, and how displeasing to me is such diminution of reverence; and of the virtue of those who live like angels. And while speaking to thee on this subject, I also touched on the excellence of the Sacraments. And further wishing thee to know of the states of tears and whence they proceed, I spoke to thee on the subject and told thee that all tears issue from the fountain of the heart, and pointed out their causes to thee in order.

"I told thee not only of the four states of tears, but also of the fifth, which germinates death. I have also answered thy fourth request, that I would provide for the particular case of an individual; I have provided as thou knowest. Further than this, I have explained My providence to thee, in general and in particular, showing thee how everything is made by divine Providence, from the first beginning of the world until the end, giving you and permitting everything to happen to you, both tribulations and consolations temporal and spiritual, and every circumstance of your life for your good, in order that you may be sanctified in Me, and My truth be fulfilled in you, which truth is that I created you in order to possess Eternal Life, and manifested this with the blood of My Only-begotten Son, the Word.

"I have also in My last words fulfilled thy desire and My promise to speak of the perfection of obedience and the imperfection of disobedience; and how obedience can be obtained and how destroyed. I have shown it to thee as a universal key, and so it is. I have also spoken to thee of particular obedience, and of the perfect and imperfect, and of those in religion, and of those in the world, explaining the condition of each distinctly to thee, and of the peace given by obedience, and the war of disobedience, and how the disobedient man is deceived, showing thee how death came into the world by the disobedience of Adam, and how I, the Eternal Father, supreme and eternal Truth, give thee this conclusion of the whole matter, that in the obedience of the Only-begotten Word, My Son, you have life, and as from that first old man you contracted the infection of death, so all of you who will take the key of obedience have contracted the infection of the life of the new Man, sweet Jesus, of whom I made a Bridge, the road to Heaven being broken. And now I urge thee and My other servants to grieve, for by your grief and humble and continual prayer I will do mercy to the world. Die to the world and hasten along this way of truth, so as not to be taken prisoner if thou goest slowly. I demand this of thee now more than at first, for now I have manifested to thee My truth. Beware that thou never leave the cell of self-knowledge, but in this cell preserve and spend the treasure which I have given thee, which is a doctrine of truth founded upon the living stone, sweet Christ Jesus, clothed in light which scatters darkness, with which doctrine clothe thyself, My best beloved and sweetest daughter, in the truth."

How this most devout soul, thanking and praising God, makes prayer for the whole world and for the Holy Church, and commending the virtue of faith brings this work to an end.

THEN that soul, having seen with the eye of the intellect, and having known by the light of holy faith the truth and excellence of obedience, hearing and tasting it with love and ecstatic desire, gazed upon the divine Majesty and gave thanks to Him, saying, "Thanks, thanks to Thee, oh eternal Father, for Thou hast not despised me, the work of Thy hands, nor turned Thy face from me, nor despised my desires, Thou, the Light, hast not regarded my darkness; Thou, true Life, hast not regarded my living death; Thou, the Physician, hast not been repelled by my grave infirmities; Thou, the eternal Purity, hast not considered the many miseries of which I am full; Thou, who art the Infinite, hast overlooked that I am finite; Thou, who art Wisdom, hast overlooked my folly; Thy wisdom, Thy goodness, Thy clemency, Thy infinite good, have overlooked these infinite evils and sins, and the many others which are in me. Having known the truth through Thy clemency, I have found Thy charity, and the love of my neighbor. What has constrained me? Not my virtues, but only Thy charity. May that same charity constrain Thee to illuminate the eye of my intellect with the light of faith, so that I may know and understand the truth which Thou hast manifested to me. Grant that my memory may be capable of retaining Thy benefits, that my will may burn in the fire of Thy charity, and may that fire so work in me that I give my body to blood, and that by that blood given for love of the Blood, together with the key of obedience, I may unlock the door of Heaven. I ask this of Thee with all my heart, for every rational creature, both in general and in particular, in the mystical body of the Holy Church. I confess and do not deny that Thou didst love me before I existed, and that Thy love for me is ineffable, as if Thou wast mad with love for Thy creature. Oh, eternal Trinity! Oh Godhead, which Godhead gave value to the Blood of Thy Son, Thou, oh eternal Trinity, art a deep Sea, into which the deeper I enter the more I find, and the more I find the more I seek; the soul cannot be satiated in Thy abyss, for she continually hungers after Thee, the eternal Trinity, desiring to see Thee with light in Thy light. As the hart desires the spring of living water, so my soul desires to leave the prison of this dark body and see Thee in truth. How long, oh eternal Trinity, fire and abyss of love, will Thy face be hidden from my eyes? Melt at once the cloud of my body. The knowledge which Thou hast given me of Thyself in Thy truth, constrains me to long to abandon the heaviness of my body, and to give my life for the glory and praise of Thy Name, for I have tasted and seen with the light of the intellect in Thy light, the abyss of Thee—the eternal Trinity, and the beauty of Thy creature, for, looking at myself in Thee, I saw myself to be Thy image, my life being given me by Thy power, oh eternal Father, and Thy wisdom, which belongs to Thy Only-begotten Son, shining in my intellect and my will, being one with Thy Holy Spirit, who proceeds from Thee and Thy Son, by whom I am able to love Thee. Thou, Eternal Trinity, art my Creator, and I am the work of Thy hands, and I know through the new creation which Thou hast given me in the blood of Thy Son, that Thou art enamored of the beauty of Thy workmanship. Oh Abyss! Oh Eternal Godhead! Oh Sea Profound, what more couldst Thou give me than Thyself! Thou art the fire which ever burns without being consumed; Thou consumest in Thy heat all the sou's self-love; Thou art the fire which takes away all cold; with Thy light Thou dost illuminate me so that I may know all Thy truth; Thou art that light above all light, which illuminates supernaturally the eye of my intellect, clarifying the light of faith so abundantly and so perfectly, that I see that my soul is alive, and in this light receives Thee—the true Light. By the Light of faith I have acquired wisdom in the wisdom of the Word—Thy Only-begotten Son. In the light of faith I am strong, constant, and persevering. In the light of faith I hope, suffer me not to faint by the way. This light, without which I should still walk in darkness, teaches me the road, and for this I said, Oh Eternal Father, that Thou hast illuminated me with the light of holy faith. Of a truth this light is a sea, for the soul revels in Thee, Eternal Trinity, the Sea Pacific. The water of the sea is not turbid, and causes no fear to the soul, for she knows the Truth; it is a deep which manifests sweet secrets, so that where the light of Thy Faith abounds, the soul is certain of what she believes. This water is a magic mirror into which Thou, the Eternal Trinity, biddest me gaze, holding it with the hand of love, that I may see myself, who am Thy creature, there represented in Thee, and Thyself in me through the union which Thou didst make of Thy Godhead with our humanity. For this light I know to represent to myself Thee—the Supreme and Infinite Good, Good Blessed and Incomprehensible, Good Inestimable. Beauty above all beauty; Wisdom above all wisdom—for Thou art wisdom itself. Thou, the food of the angels, hast given Thyself in a fire of love to men; Thou, the garment which covers all our nakedness, feedest the hungry with Thy sweetness. Oh Sweet, without any bitter, oh Eternal Trinity, I have known in Thy light, which Thou hast given me with the light of holy faith, the many and wonderful things Thou hast declared to me, explaining to me the path of supreme perfection, so that I may no longer serve Thee in darkness, but with light, and that I may be the mirror of a good and holy life, and arise from my miserable sins, for through them I have hitherto served Thee in darkness. I have not known Thy truth and have not loved it. Why did I not know Thee? Because I did not see Thee with the glorious light of the Holy Faith; because the cloud of self-love darkened the eye of my intellect, and Thou, the eternal Trinity, hast dissipated the darkness with Thy light. Who can attain to Thy Greatness, and give Thee thanks for such immeasurable gifts and benefits as Thou hast given me in this doctrine of truth, which has been a special grace over and above the ordinary graces which Thou givest also to Thy other creatures? Thou hast been willing to descend to my need and to that of Thy creatures—the need of introspection. Having first given the grace to ask the question, Thou repliest to it, and satisfiest Thy servant, penetrating me with a ray of grace, so that in that light I may give Thee thanks. Clothe me, clothe me with Thee, oh Eternal Truth, that I may run my mortal course with true obedience and the light of holy faith, with which light I feel that my

soul is about to become inebriated afresh."

Letter of Ser Barduccio di Piero Canigiani, containing the Transit of the Seraphic Virgin, Saint Catherine of Siena, to Sister Catherine Petriboni in the Monastery of San Piero a Monticelli near Florence. In the Name of Jesus Christ.

DEAREST Mother in Christ Jesus, and Sister in the holy memory of our blessed mother Catherine, I, Barduccio, a wretched and guilty sinner, recommend myself to your holy prayers as a feeble infant, orphaned by the death of so great a mother. I received your letter and read it with much pleasure, and communicated it to my afflicted mothers here, who, supremely grateful for your great charity and tender love towards them, recommend themselves greatly, for their part, to your prayers, and beg you to recommend them to the Prioress and all the sisters that they may be ready to do all that may be pleasing to God concerning themselves and you. But since you, as a beloved and faithful daughter, desire to know the end of our common mother, I am constrained to satisfy your desire; and although I know myself to be but little fitted to give such a narration, I will write in any case what my feeble eyes have seen, and what the dull senses of my soul have been able to comprehend.

This blessed virgin and mother of thousands of souls, about the feast of the Circumcision, began to feel so great a change both in soul and body, that she was obliged to alter her mode of life, the action of taking food for her sustenance becoming so loathsome to her, that it was only with the greatest difficulty that she could force herself to take any, and, when she did so, she swallowed nothing of the substance of the food, but had the habit of rejecting it. Moreover, not one drop of water could she swallow for refreshment, whence came to her a most violent and tedious thirst, and so great an inflammation of her throat that her breath seemed to be fire, with all which, however, she remained in very good health, robust and fresh as usual. In these conditions we reached Sexagesima Sunday, when, about the hour of Vespers, at the time of her prayer, she had so violent a stroke that from that day onwards she was no longer in health. Towards the night of the following Monday, just after I had written a letter, she had another stroke so terrific, that we all mourned her as dead, remaining under it for a long time without giving any sign of life. Then, rising, she stood for an equal space of time, and did not seem the same person as she who had fallen.

From that hour began new travail and bitter pains in her body, and, Lent having arrived, she began, in spite of her infirmity, to give herself with such application of mind to prayer that the frequency of the humble sighs and sorrowful plaints which she exhaled from the depth of her heart appeared to us a miracle. I think, too, that you know that her prayers were so fervent that one hour spent in prayer by her reduced that dear tender frame to greater weakness than would be suffered by one who should persist for two whole days in prayer. Meanwhile, every morning, after Communion, she arose from the earth in such a state that anyone who had seen her would have thought her dead, and was thus carried back to bed. Thence, after an hour or two, she would arise afresh, and we would go to St. Peter's, although a good mile distant, where she would place herself in prayer, so remaining until Vespers, finally returning to the house so worn out that she seemed a corpse.

These were her exercises up till the third Sunday in Lent, when she finally succumbed, conquered by the innumerable sufferings, which daily increased, and consumed her body, and the infinite afflictions of the soul which she derived from the consideration of the sins which she saw being committed against God, and from the dangers ever more grave to which she knew the Holy Church to be exposed, on account of which she remained greatly overcome, and both internally and externally tormented. She lay in this state for eight weeks, unable to lift her head, and full of intolerable pains, from the soles of her feet to the crown of her head, to such an extent that she would often say: "These pains are truly physical, but not natural; for it seems that God has given permission to the devils to torment this body at their pleasure." And, in truth, it evidently was so; for, if I were to attempt to explain the patience which she practiced, under this terrible and unheard-of agony, I should fear to injure, by my explanations, facts which cannot be explained. This only will I say, that, every time that a new torment came upon her, she would joyously raise her eyes and her heart to God and say: "Thanks to Thee, oh eternal Spouse, for granting such graces afresh every day to me, Thy miserable and most unworthy handmaid!"

In this way her body continued to consume itself until the Sunday before the Ascension; but by that time it was reduced to such a state that it seemed like a corpse in a picture, though I speak not of the face, which remained ever angelical and breathed forth devotion, but of the bosom and limbs, in which nothing could be seen but the bones, covered by the thinnest skin, and so feeble was she from the waist downwards that she could not move herself, even a little, from one side to another. In the night preceding the aforesaid Sunday, about two hours or more before dawn, a great change was produced in her, and we thought that she was approaching the end. The whole family was then called around her, and she, with singular humility and devotion, made signs to those who were standing near that she desired to receive Holy Absolution for her faults and the pains due to them, and so it was done. After which she became gradually reduced to such a state that we could observe no other movement than her breathing—continuous, sad, and feeble. On account of this it seemed right to give her Extreme Unction, which our abbot of

Sant' Antimo did, while she lay as it were deprived of feeling.

After this unction she began altogether to change, and to make various signs with her head and her arms as if to show that she was suffering from grave assaults of demons, and remained in this calamitous state for an hour-and-a-half, half of which time having been passed in silence, she began to say: "I have sinned! Oh Lord, have mercy on me!" And this, as I believe, she repeated more than sixty times, raising each time her right arm, and then letting it fall and strike the bed. Then, changing her words, she said as many times again, but without moving her arms, "Holy God, have mercy on me!" Finally she employed the remainder of the above-mentioned time with many other formulas of prayer both humble and devout, expressing various acts of virtue, after which her face suddenly changed from gloom to angelic light, and her tearful and clouded eyes became serene and joyous, in such a manner that I could not doubt that, like one saved from a deep sea, she was restored to herself, which circumstance greatly mitigated the grief of her sons and daughters who were standing around in the affliction you can imagine.

Catherine had been lying on the bosom of Mother Alessia and now succeeded in rising, and with a little help began to sit up, leaning against the same mother. In the meantime we had put before her eyes a pious picture, containing many relics and various pictures of the Saints. She, however, fixed her eyes on the image of the Cross set in it, and began to adore it, explaining, in words, certain of her most profound feelings of the goodness of God, and while she prayed, she accused herself in general of all her sins in the sight of God, and, in particular, said: "It is my fault, oh eternal Trinity, that I have offended Thee so miserably with my negligence, ignorance, ingratitude, and disobedience, and many other defects. Wretch that I am! for I have not observed Thy commandments, either those which are given in general to all, or those which Thy goodness laid upon me in particular! Oh mean creature that I am!" Saying which, she struck her breast, repeating her confession, and continued: "I have not observed Thy precept, with which Thou didst command me to seek always to give Thee honor, and to spend myself in labors for my neighbor, while I, on the contrary, have fled from labors, especially where they were necessary. Didst Thou not command me, oh my God, to abandon all thought of myself and to consider solely the praise and glory of Thy Name in the salvation of souls, and with this food alone, taken from the table of the most holy Cross, to comfort myself? But I have sought my own consolation. Thou didst ever invite me to bind myself to Thee alone by sweet, loving, and fervent desires, by tears and humble and continuous prayers for the salvation of the whole world and for the reformation of the Holy Church, promising me that, on account of them, Thou wouldest use mercy with the world, and give new beauty to Thy Spouse; but I, wretched one, have not corresponded with Thy desire, but have remained asleep in the bed of negligence.

"Oh, unhappy that I am! Thou hast placed me in charge of souls, assigning to me so many beloved sons, that I should love them with singular love and direct them to Thee by the way of Life, but I have been to them nothing but a mirror of human weakness; I have had no care of them; I have not helped them with continuous and humble prayer in Thy presence, nor have I given them sufficient examples of the good life or the warnings of salutary doctrine. Oh, mean creature that I am! With how little reverence have I received Thy innumerable gifts, the graces of such sweet torments and labors which it pleased Thee to accumulate on this fragile body, nor have I endured them with that burning desire and ardent love with which Thou didst send them to me. Alas! oh my Love, through Thy excessive goodness Thou didst choose me for Thy spouse, from the beginning of my childhood, but I was not faithful enough; in fact, I was unfaithful to Thee, because I did not keep my memory faithful to Thee alone and to Thy most high benefits; nor have I fixed my intelligence on the thought of them only or disposed my will to love Thee immediately with all its strength."

Of these and many other similar things did that pure dove accuse herself, rather, as I think, for our example than for her own need, and then, turning to the priest, said: "For the love of Christ crucified, absolve me of all these sins which I have confessed in the presence of God, and of all the others which I cannot remember." That done, she asked again for the plenary indulgence, saying that it had been granted her by Pope Gregory and Pope Urban, saying this as one hungered for the Blood of Christ. So I did what she asked, and she, keeping her eyes ever fixed on the Crucifix, began afresh to adore it with the greatest devotion, and to say certain very profound things which I, for my sins, was not worthy to understand, and also on account of the grief with which I was laboring and the anguish with which her throat was oppressed, which was so great that she could hardly utter her words, while we, placing our ears to her mouth, were able to catch one or two now and again, passing them on from one to the other. After this she turned to certain of her sons, who had not been present at a memorable discourse, which, many days previously, she had made to the whole family, showing us the way of salvation and perfection, and laying upon each of us the particular task which he was to perform after her death. She now did the same to these others, begging most humbly pardon of all for the slight care which she seemed to have had of our salvation. Then she said certain things to Lucio and to another, and finally to me, and then turned herself straightway to prayer.

Oh, had you seen with what humility and reverence she begged and received many times the blessing of her most sorrowful mother, all that I can say is that it was a bitter sweet to her! How full of tender affection was the spectacle of the mother, recommending herself to her blessed child, and begging her to obtain a particular grace from God—namely, that in these melancholy circumstances she might not offend Him. But all these things did not distract the holy virgin from the fervor of her prayer; and, approaching her end, she began to pray especially for the Catholic Church, for which she declared she was giving her life. She prayed again for Pope Urban VI, whom she resolutely confessed to be the true Pontiff, and strengthened her sons never to hesitate to give their life for that truth. Then, with the greatest fervor, she besought all her beloved children whom

the Lord had given her, to love Him alone, repeating many of the words which our Saviour used, when He recommended the disciples to the Father, praying with such affection, that, at hearing her, not only our hearts, but the very stones might have been broken. Finally, making the Sign of the Cross, she blessed us all, and thus continued in prayer to the end of her life for which she had so longed, saying: "Thou, oh Lord, callest me, and I come to Thee, not through my merits, but through Thy mercy alone, which I ask of Thee, in virtue of Thy Blood!" And many times she called out: "Blood, Blood!" Finally, after the example of the Saviour, she said: "Father, into Thy Hands I commend my soul and my spirit," and thus sweetly, with a face all shining and angelical, she bent her head, and gave up the ghost.

Her transit occurred on the Sunday at the hour of Sext, but we kept her unburied until the hour of Compline on Tuesday, without any odor being perceptible, her body remaining so pure, intact, and fragrant, that her arms, her neck and her legs remained as flexible as if she were still alive. During those three days the body was visited by crowds of people, and lucky he thought himself who was able to touch it. Almighty God also worked many miracles in that time, which in my hurry I omit. Her tomb is visited devoutly by the Faithful, like those of the other holy bodies which are in Rome, and Almighty God is granting many graces in the name of His blessed spouse, and I doubt not that there will be many more, and we are made great by hearing of them. I say no more. Recommend me to the Prioress and all the sisters, for I have, at present, the greatest need of the help of prayer. May Almighty God preserve you and help you to grow in His grace.

A COLLECTION OF CLASSIC ARTWORK



The Ecstasy of Saint Catherine of
Siena, by Agostino Carracci



Saint Catherine of Siena, by Unknown



Saint Catherine of Siena Exorcising a Possessed Woman, by Girolamo di Benvenuto



Catherine of Siena, by Anonymous



Saint Catherine of Siena, by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo



Catherine of Siena, by Giovanni di Paolo



Catherine of Siena, by Matteo di Giovanni

CATHOLIC PRAYERS



CATHOLIC PRAYERS

TAN

Compiled from Traditional Sources
By Thomas A. Nelson

CATHOLIC PRAYERS

"... All things whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive."

—Matthew 21:22



The Blessed Virgin Mary in adoration and prayer before the Child Jesus, with Angels in attendance.

Painting: Heinrich Kauter 1873 (1901). Photo: Victoria Ambrosetti/Photo E 2907 TA N

CATHOLIC PRAYERS

Compiled From Traditional Sources

By

Thomas A. Nelson

"If you abide in me and my words abide in you, you shall ask whatever you will, and it shall be done unto you."

—John 15:7

TAN Books
Charlotte, North Carolina

Imprimatur: Rev. Msgr. David D. Kagan, J.C.L.

Vicar General
Rockford, Illinois
July 3, 2007

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ISBN: 978-0-89555-912-8
89555-912-9

Cover illustration and frontispiece: Painting by Heinrich Kaiser (1813-1900); photo by Victoria Ambrosetti. Photo ©; 2007 TAN Books and Publishers, Inc.

Printed and bound in the United States of America.

TAN Books
Charlotte, North Carolina
2006

Dedicated to
The Blessed Virgin Mary,
Our Model in Prayer

Some Notes On Prayer

Prayer is “a raising of the mind and heart to God.” Prayer is made for four basic reasons: 1) to *adore and praise God*, 2) to *thank Him* for blessings received, 3) to *ask pardon for and expiate* (or “make up for”) *our sins*, and 4) to *petition Him* for all our needs. To be effective, prayer must be 1) *humble*, 2) *confident*, 3) *persevering*, 4) *focused* (not wilfully distracted) and 5) *penitent* (with sorrow for our sins). There are two types of prayer, *mental* and *vocal*. Mental prayer is meditation on spiritual truths; vocal prayer consists of repeating set words. All vocal prayer has some mental prayer built in. *Catholic Prayers* is a book of vocal prayer. St. Anthony Mary Claret (1807-1870) found vocal prayer much easier than mental prayer and felt Our Lord’s sensible presence more in vocal prayer;¹ he became so holy that toward the end of his life he received the grace that the Blessed Sacrament was always conserved in his breast.²

Everyone is obliged to pray, for without prayer—as St. Alphonsus teaches—we shall not receive the actual graces necessary to save our souls. We must ask for them.³ We cannot say, “God knows what I need; I don’t need to remind Him!” Rather, Scripture admonishes us, “in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your petitions be made known to God.” (*Phil. 4:6*). The Saints concur with St. John Chrysostom (347-407) that “It is simply impossible, without prayer, to lead a virtuous life.”⁴ Therefore, we should “Pray without ceasing.” (*1 Thess. 5:17*).

1. *The Autobiography of St. Anthony Mary Claret*, Louis Joseph Moore, C.M.F., Trans., 1945; TAN, 1985, p. 197.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 180, 181.

3. St. A. de Liguori, *The Great Means of Salvation and Perfection*, Part I, Ch. I, Sec. I.

4. Cf. *Voice of the Saints*, Sel. & Arr. by Francis W. Johnston, 1965; rpt. TAN, 1986, p. 35.

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Deliver Us From Evil

"Offer to God the sacrifice of praise [the Mass], and pay thy vows to the most High. And call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." (Psalm 49:14-15).

"Let nothing hinder thee from praying always, and be not afraid to be justified even to death, for the reward of God continueth forever." (Ecclesiasticus 18:22).

"Watch ye, therefore, praying at all times, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that are to come, and to stand before the Son of man." (Luke 21:36).

"Ask and it shall be given to you; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened to you. For everyone that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened." (Matthew 7:7-8).

"If two of you shall consent upon earth, concerning anything whatsoever they shall ask, it shall be done to them by my Father in heaven. For where there are two or three gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matthew 18:19-20).*

*This promise depends, of course, on the persons fulfilling the five requirements for effective prayer. (See page vi in this book.)

— Part One —
BELOVED PRAYERS

Which All Catholics Should Know By Heart

X V 938.b.



St. Jerome in the act of contemplating the Crucifix,
by Giovanni Battista Piranesi

The Sign of the Cross

This most fundamental prayer is used to begin and end one's prayers and to ward off the attacks of the devil. It is especially powerful when used with Holy Water.

IN THE NAME of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Our Father

OUR FATHER, Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Hail Mary

AIL MARY, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Glory Be

GLORY BE to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

The Apostles' Creed

I BELIEVE in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, Our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into Hell; the third day He arose again from the dead; He ascended into Heaven, sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the Resurrection of the Body, and life everlasting. Amen.

The Act of Faith

MY GOD, I firmly believe that Thou art one God in Three Divine Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. I believe that Thy Divine Son became man, and died for our sins, and that He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the Holy Catholic Church teaches, because Thou hast revealed them, Who canst neither deceive nor be deceived.

The Act of Hope

MY GOD, relying on Thy almighty power and infinite mercy and promises, I hope to obtain pardon of my sins, the help of Thy grace, and life everlasting, through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Redeemer.

The Act of Charity

MY GOD, I love Thee above all things, with my whole heart and soul, because Thou art all-good and worthy of all love. I love my neighbor as myself for the love of Thee. I forgive all who have injured me, and ask pardon of all whom I have injured.

The Act of Contrition

It is good to begin our prayers by purifying our souls with an act of contrition.

MY GOD, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest all my sins because I dread the loss of Heaven and the pains of Hell; but most of all, because they offend Thee, my God, Who art all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Thy grace, to confess my sins, to do penance and to amend my life. Amen.

The Confiteor

CONFESS to Almighty God, to Blessed Mary ever virgin, to Blessed Michael the Archangel, to Blessed John the Baptist, to the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and to all the Saints, that I have sinned exceedingly, in thought, word and deed; through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault. Therefore I beseech Blessed Mary ever virgin, Blessed Michael the Archangel, Blessed John the Baptist, the holy Apostles Peter and Paul and all the Saints, to pray to the Lord our God for me. May Almighty God have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

May the Almighty and Merciful Lord grant us pardon, absolution and remission of all our sins. Amen.



The Coronation of the Virgin, by Fra Angelico

The Hail, Holy Queen

Salve Regina

HAIL, holy Queen, Mother of mercy, our life, our sweetness and our hope! To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve. To thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn then, Most Gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us. And after this our exile, show unto us the blessed Fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

R. *That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.*

The Memorare

Famous Prayer of St. Bernard of Clairvaux

REMEMBER, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help or sought thy intercession was left unaided. Inspired with this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother. To thee do I come, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me. Amen.

Prayer After the Rosary

O GOD, Whose only-begotten Son, by His life, death and Resurrection, has purchased for us the rewards of eternal salvation, grant, we beseech Thee, that meditating upon these Mysteries of the Most Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we may both imitate what they contain and obtain what they promise. Through the same Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Prayer to St. Michael The Archangel

S T. MICHAEL the Archangel, defend us in the battle; be our safeguard against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly host, by the power of God, cast into Hell Satan and all the other evil spirits who prowl about the world seeking the ruin and destruction of souls. Amen.

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus,

Have mercy on us.

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus,

Have mercy on us.

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus,

Have mercy on us.

Come, Holy Ghost

V. Come, Holy Ghost, fill the hearts of Thy faithful;

R. *And kindle in them the fire of Thy love.*

V. Send forth Thy Spirit, and they shall be created;

R. *And Thou shalt renew the face of the earth.*

Let Us Pray

O God, Who hast instructed the hearts of the Faithful by the light of the Holy Ghost, grant we beseech Thee, that by the gift of the same Spirit we may be always truly wise and ever rejoice in His consolation, through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Morning Offering

Of the Apostleship of Prayer

O JESUS, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer Thee all my prayers, works, joys and sufferings of this day for all the intentions of Thy Sacred Heart, in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world, in reparation for all my sins, for the intentions of all our associates, and in particular for the special intentions of our Holy Father for this month. Amen.

Angel of God

ANGEL of God, my guardian dear, To whom God's love commits me here, Ever this day (night), be at my side, To light and guard, to rule and guide. Amen.

Another Morning Offering

Based on Our Lady of Fatima's requests

OJESUS, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer Thee all my prayers, works, joys and sufferings and all that this day may bring: for the love of Thee, for the conversion of sinners, and in reparation for the sins committed against the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Amen.

Grace Before Meals

(Make the Sign of the Cross.)

BLESS US, O Lord, and these Thy gifts which we are about to receive from Thy bounty, through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

(Make the Sign of the Cross.)

Grace After Meals

(Make the Sign of the Cross.)

WE GIVE Thee thanks, Almighty God, for these and all Thy benefits, Who livest and reignest forever. Amen. And may the souls of the Faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

ETERNAL REST grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May the souls of all the Faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

(Make the Sign of the Cross.)



The Angelus, by Jean-Francois Millet

The Angelus

The Angelus is traditionally prayed standing, in the morning (6:00 a.m.), at noon and in the evening (6:00 p.m.) throughout the year, except during Paschal Time (Easter Sunday through the Saturday after Pentecost), when the Regina Coeli is prayed instead.

- V. The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary.
R. *And she conceived of the Holy Ghost. Hail Mary ...*
V. Behold the handmaid of the Lord.
R. *Be it done unto me according to thy word. Hail Mary ...*
V. And the Word was made Flesh. (*Genuflect.*)
R. *And dwelt among us. (Arise.) Hail Mary ...*
V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.
R. *That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.*

Let Us Pray

Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts, that we to whom the Incarnation of Christ, Thy Son, was made known by the message of an angel, may by His Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of His Resurrection. Through the same Christ Our Lord. Amen.

The Regina Coeli

This prayer is traditionally prayed standing, in the morning (6:00 a.m.), at noon and in the evening (6:00 p.m.), during Paschal Time (from Easter through the evening of the Saturday after Pentecost) instead of The Angelus.

- V. Queen of Heaven, rejoice. Alleluia.
R. *For He whom thou wast worthy to bear. Alleluia.*
V. Has risen as He said. Alleluia.
R. *Pray for us to God. Alleluia.*
V. Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary. Alleluia.
R. *For the Lord is truly risen. Alleluia.*

Let Us Pray

O God, Who by the Resurrection of Thy Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, hast been pleased to give joy to the whole world, grant, we beseech Thee, that through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, His Mother, we may attain the joys of eternal life. Through the same Christ Our Lord. Amen.

O Sacrament Most Holy

OSACRAMENT most holy,
OSacrament divine!
All praise and all thanksgiving
Be every moment Thine!

Jesus, Mary and Joseph

JESUS, Mary and Joseph, I give Thee my heart and my soul.
Jesus, Mary and Joseph, assist me in my last agony.
Jesus, Mary and Joseph, may I breathe forth my soul in peace with Thee.

O My Jesus

To be said after the Glory Be, following each decade of the Rosary. This brief prayer was requested by Our Lady of Fatima in 1917.

OMY JESUS, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of Hell, lead all souls to Heaven, especially those who are most in need of Thy mercy.

Sacrifice Prayer

Our Lady of Fatima said: Sacrifice yourselves for sinners, and say many times, especially whenever you make some sacrifice:

OMY JESUS, I offer this for love of Thee, for the conversion of sinners, and in reparation for sins committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

— Part Two —
POWERFUL PRAYERS

For Times of Special Need

The Golden Arrow

To be said in reparation for blasphemy and the profanation of Sunday; revealed by Our Lord to Sister Mary of St. Peter, O. C.D. (1816-1848) at Tours, France, but which may also be said for any pressing need. This prayer delightfully "wounds" the Heart of Jesus, which then pours forth torrents of graces for the conversion of sinners. The Golden Arrow is actually only the first of these prayers, but all said together are extremely powerful.

MAY the most holy, most sacred, most adorable, most incomprehensible and ineffable Name of God be forever praised, blessed, loved, adored and glorified, in Heaven, on earth, and under the earth, by all the creatures of God, and by the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. Amen.

(Pray the above two times).

OLORD Jesus Christ, in presenting ourselves before Thine adorable Face to ask of Thee the graces of which we stand in greatest need, we beseech Thee, above all, to grant us that interior disposition of never refusing at any time to do what Thou requirest of us by Thy holy commandments and divine inspirations. Amen.

OGOOD Jesus, Who hast said, "Ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you," grant us, O Lord, that faith which obtains all, or supply in us what may be deficient; grant us, by the pure effect of Thy charity, and for Thine eternal glory, the graces which we need and which we look for from Thine infinite mercy. Amen.

BE merciful to us, O my God, and reject not our prayers, when amid our afflictions, we call upon Thy Holy Name and seek with love and confidence Thine adorable Face. Amen.

OALMIGHTY and Eternal God, look upon the Face of Thy Son Jesus. We present It to Thee with confidence, to implore Thy pardon. The All-Merciful Advocate opens His mouth to plead our cause; hearken to His cries, behold His tears, God, and through His infinite merits, hearken to Him when He intercedes for us poor miserable sinners. Amen.

ADORABLE Face of my Jesus, my only love, my light and my life, grant that may know Thee, love Thee and serve Thee alone, that I may live with Thee, of Thee, by Thee and for Thee. Amen.

ETERNAL Father, I offer Thee the adorable Face of Thy Beloved Son, for the honor and glory of Thy Name, for the conversion of sinners and for the salvation of the dying.

ODIVINE Jesus, through Thy Face and Name, save us. Our hope is in the virtue of Thy Holy Name! Amen.

Promises of Our Lord Jesus Christ to Sr. Mary of St. Peter, Discalced Carmelite Nun of Tours, France, to those who thus honor His Holy Face:

1. All those who honor My Face in a spirit of reparation will, by so doing, perform the office of the pious Veronica. According to the care they take in making reparation to My Face, disfigured by blasphemers, so will I take care of their souls, which have been disfigured by sin. My Face is the seal of the Divinity, which has the virtue of reproducing in souls the image of God. 2. Those who by words, prayers or writing defend My cause in this Work of Reparation I will defend before My Father, and will give them My Kingdom. 3. By offering My Face to My Eternal Father, nothing will be refused, and the conversion of many sinners will be obtained. 4. By My Holy Face, they will work wonders, appease the anger of God and draw down mercy on sinners. 5. As in a kingdom they can procure all that is desired with a coin stamped with the King's effigy, so in the Kingdom of Heaven they will obtain all they desire with the precious coin of My Holy Face. 6. Those who on earth contemplate the wounds of My Face shall in Heaven behold it radiant with glory. 7. They will receive in their souls a bright and constant irradiation of My Divinity, that by their likeness to My Face they shall shine with particular splendor in Heaven. 8. I will defend them, I will preserve them and I assure them of Final Perseverance.

**Powerful Novena Prayer
To The Infant Jesus**

For Cases of Urgent Need

In cases of great urgency, a novena of nine hours may be made instead of nine days. The prayers should, if possible, be repeated at the same part of the hour, every hour for nine consecutive hours.

OJESUS, Who hast said, "Ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you," through the intercession of Mary, Thy most holy Mother, I knock, I seek, I ask that my prayer will be granted. (*Mention your request.*)

OJESUS, Who hast said, "All that you ask of the Father in My Name He will grant you," through the intercession of Mary, Thy most holy Mother, I humbly and urgently ask Thy Father in Thy Name that my prayer will be granted. (*Mention your request.*)

OJESUS, Who hast said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My word shall not pass away," through the intercession of Mary, Thy most holy Mother, I feel confident that my prayer will be granted. (*Mention your request.*)

(Then pray the following prayer of thanksgiving.)



Saint Anthony of Padua and the Infant Jesus,
by Bartolome Esteban Murillo

**Prayer of Thanksgiving
To The Infant Jesus**

I prostrate myself before Thy holy image, O most gracious Infant Jesus, to offer Thee my most fervent thanks for the blessings Thou hast bestowed upon me. I shall incessantly praise Thine ineffable mercy and confess that Thou alone art my God, my Helper and my Protector. Henceforth my entire confidence shall be placed in Thee! Everywhere I shall proclaim aloud Thy mercy and generosity, so that Thy great love and the great deeds which Thou dost perform through this miraculous image may be acknowledged by all. May devotion to Thy Holy Infancy increase more and more in the hearts of all Christians, and may all who experience Thine assistance persevere with me in showing unceasing gratitude to Thy most holy infancy, to which be praise and glory forever. Amen.

**Powerful Novena to the Sacred
Heart of Jesus—A Favorite
Of Padre Pio**

Padre Pio recited this novena prayer every day for all those who requested his prayers.

O MY JESUS, Thou hast said: "Truly I say to you, ask and it will be given you, seek and you will find, knock and it will be opened to you." Behold I knock, I seek, and I ask for the grace of (*Here name your request*).

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, I place all my trust in Thee.

O MY JESUS, Thou hast said: "Truly I say to you, if you ask anything of the Father in My name, He will give it to you." Behold, in Thy name, I ask the Father for the grace of (*Here name your request*).

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, I place all my trust in Thee.

O MY JESUS, Thou hast said: "Truly I say to you, Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away." Encouraged by Thy infallible words, I now ask for the grace of (*Here name your request*).

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, I place all my trust in Thee.

Let Us Pray

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, for Whom it is impossible not to have compassion on the afflicted, have pity on us miserable sinners and grant us the grace which we ask of Thee, through the Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary, Thy tender Mother and ours.

Hail, Holy Queen ...

St. Joseph, foster father of Jesus, pray for us.

Pour Forth Thy Grace

POUR forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts, that we to whom the Incarnation of Christ Thy Son was made known by the message of an Angel, may by His Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of His Resurrection, through the same Christ Our Lord. Amen.

**Novena Prayer to
Our Lady of Good Remedy**

Source of Unfailing Help

This is an extremely powerful prayer! Devotion to Our Lady of Good Remedy originated in the 12th century when large sums of money were needed to ransom Christians who had been captured and sold into slavery by the Mohammedans. Under Our Lady's patronage, St. John of Matha and the Trinitarian Order were able to raise the funds to free many thousands of Christians.

O QUEEN OF HEAVEN and earth, Most Holy Virgin, we venerate thee. Thou art the beloved Daughter of the Most High God, the chosen Mother of the Incarnate Word, the Immaculate Spouse of the Holy Spirit, the Sacred Vessel of the Most Holy Trinity.

O Mother of the Divine Redeemer, who under the title of Our Lady of Good Remedy comes to the aid of all who call upon thee, extend thy maternal protection to us. We depend on thee, Dear Mother, as helpless and needy children depend on a tender and caring mother. *Hail Mary ...*

O LADY of Good Remedy, source of unfailing help, grant that we may draw from thy treasury of graces in our time of need.

Touch the hearts of sinners, that they may seek reconciliation and forgiveness. Bring comfort to the afflicted and the lonely; help the poor and the hopeless; aid the sick and the suffering. May they be healed in body and strengthened in spirit to endure their sufferings with patient resignation and Christian fortitude. *Hail Mary ...*

DEAR Lady of Good Remedy, source of unfailing help, thy compassionate heart knows a remedy for every affliction and misery we encounter in life. Help me with thy prayers and intercession to find a remedy for my problems and needs, especially for ... (*Here mention your special intentions*).

On my part, O loving Mother, I pledge myself to a more intensely Christian lifestyle, to a more careful observance of the laws of God, to be more conscientious in fulfilling the obligations of my state in life, and to strive to be a source of healing in this broken world of ours. *Hail Mary ...*

DEAR Lady of Good Remedy, be ever present to me, and through thy intercession, may I enjoy health of body and peace of mind, and grow stronger in the faith and in the love of thy Son, Jesus. *Hail Mary ...*

V. Pray for us, O Holy Mother of Good Remedy,
R. That we may deepen our dedication to thy Son, and make the world alive with His Spirit. Amen.



The Holy Family, by Bartolomé Esteban Pérez Murillo

Memorare to St. Joseph

This is an extremely powerful prayer that can be said for any need, since St. Joseph is the Universal Patron.

REMEMBER, O most illustrious Patriarch St. Joseph, on the testimony of St. Teresa, thy devoted client, never has it been heard that anyone who invoked thy protection or sought thy mediation has not obtained relief. In this confidence I come before thee, my loving protector, chaste spouse of Mary, foster-father of the Saviour of men and dispenser of the treasures of His Sacred Heart. Despise not my earnest prayer, but graciously hear and obtain my petition. (*Here mention your request.*)

Let Us Pray

O God, Who by Thine ineffable Providence didst vouchsafe to choose Blessed Joseph to be the spouse of Thy most holy Mother, grant, we beseech Thee, that he whom we venerate as our protector on earth may be our intercessor in Heaven, Who livest and reignest forever and ever. Amen.

St. Joseph, Patron of a Happy Death, pray for us.

Prayer to St. Joseph To Obtain a Special Favor

OBLESSED Saint Joseph, tenderhearted father, faithful guardian of Jesus, chaste spouse of the Mother of God, we pray and beseech thee to offer to God the Father His Divine Son, bathed in blood on the cross for sinners, and through the thrice-holy Name of Jesus, obtain for us from the Eternal Father the favor we implore. (*Here mention your intention.*)

Appease the Divine anger so justly inflamed by our crimes; beg of Jesus mercy for thy children. Amid the splendors of eternity, forget not the sorrows of those who suffer, those who pray, those who weep. Stay the Almighty arm which smites us, that by thy prayers and those of thy most holy spouse, the Heart of Jesus may be moved to pity and to pardon. Amen.

St. Joseph, pray for us.

Prayer to St. Joseph In a Difficult Problem

OGLORIOUS St. Joseph, thou who hast the power to render possible even things which are considered impossible, come to our aid in our present trouble and distress. Take this important and difficult affair under thy particular protection, that it may end happily. (*Name your request.*)

O dear St. Joseph, all our confidence is placed in thee. Let it not be said that we have invoked thee in vain, and since thou art so powerful with Jesus and Mary, show that thy goodness equals thy power. Amen.

St. Joseph, friend of the Sacred Heart, pray for us.

An Ancient Prayer To St. Joseph

OST. JOSEPH, whose protection is so great, so strong, so prompt before the throne of God, I place in thee all my interests and desires.

O St. Joseph, assist me by thy powerful intercession and obtain for me all spiritual blessings through thy foster Son, Jesus Christ Our Lord, so that, having engaged here below thy heavenly power, I may offer thee my thanksgiving and homage.

O St. Joseph, I never weary contemplating thee, and Jesus asleep in thine arms. I dare not approach while He reposes near thy heart. Press Him in my name and kiss His fine head for me, and ask Him to return the kiss when I draw my dying breath.

St. Joseph, Patron of departing souls, pray for me.

Publisher's Note: We reproduce here, without comment or guarantee, the following statement which usually accompanies the foregoing prayer:

This prayer was found in the fiftieth year of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. In 1505 it was sent from the Pope to Emperor Charles V when he was going into battle. Whoever shall read this prayer or hear it or keep it about himself shall never die a sudden death or be drowned, nor shall poison take effect on him—neither shall he fall into the hands of the enemy or be burned in any fire or be overpowered in battle.

Say for nine mornings for anything you may desire. It has never been known to fail.

Prayer to St. Anne For a Special Need

OGLORIOUS ST. ANNE—filled with compassion for those who invoke thee and with love for those who suffer—heavily laden with the weight of my troubles, I cast myself at thy feet and humbly beg of thee to take under thy special protection the present affair which I recommend to thee. (*State your petition.*)

Deign to command it to thy daughter, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and lay it before the throne of Jesus, so that He may bring it to a happy conclusion. Cease not to intercede for me until my request is granted. Above all, obtain for me the grace of one day beholding my God face to face, and with thee and Mary and all the Saints, of praising and blessing Him for all eternity.

O Good St. Anne, mother of her who is our Life, our Sweetness and our Hope, pray to her for us, and obtain our request. Amen. (*Pray this last paragraph 3 times.*)
I thank thee, dear St. Anne.

Prayer to St. Jude

Patron of “Hopeless Cases”

OGLORIOUS APOSTLE St. Jude, faithful servant and friend of Jesus, the name of the traitor who delivered thy beloved Master into the hands of His enemies has caused thee to be forgotten by many, but the Church honors and invokes thee universally as the Patron of Hopeless Cases, of things almost despaired of. Pray for me who am so helpless and alone. Make use, I implore thee, of that particular privilege granted to thee to bring visible and speedy help where help was almost despaired of. Come to my assistance in this great need, that I will receive the consolation and succor of Heaven in all my necessities, tribulations and sufferings, but in particular, that... (*here make your intention*) and that I may praise God with thee and with all the Saints forever. I promise thee, O blessed St. Jude, to be ever mindful of this great favor and never cease to honor thee as my special and powerful patron, and to do all in my power gratefully to encourage devotion to thee. Amen.

Prayer to St. Anthony of Padua

St. Anthony of Padua is invoked in a wide variety of needs but is especially renowned as the “Patron of Lost Objects.”

OHOLY ST. ANTHONY, gentlest of Saints, thy love for God and charity for His creatures made thee worthy when on earth to possess miraculous powers. Miracles waited on thy word, which thou wert ever ready to speak for those in trouble or anxiety. Encouraged by this thought, I implore theeto obtain for me... (*Here mention your request.*) The answer to my prayer may require a miracle; even so, thou art the Saint of Miracles. O gentle and loving St. Anthony, whose heart was ever full of human sympathy, whisper my petition into the ears of the sweet Infant Jesus, Who loved to be folded in thy arms, and the gratitude of my heart will ever be thine. Amen.

Miraculous Prayer to The Little Flower of Jesus

St. Therese (1873-1897) promised to assist anyone who called upon her for any reason. “I will spend my Heaven in doing good upon earth.” “I will let fall a shower of roses.”

OLITTLE FLOWER OF JESUS, ever consoling troubled souls with heavenly graces, in thine unfailing intercession I place my confident trust. From the heart of our divine Saviour, petition the blessings of which I stand in greatest need, especially ... (*here mention your intention*). Shower upon me thy promised roses of virtue and grace, dear St. Therese, so that swiftly advancing in sanctity and perfect love of neighbor, I may someday receive the crown of life eternal. Amen.

Novena Prayer to St. Philomena Virgin, Martyr and Wonder-Worker

St. Philomena helps in all sorts of problems, but is particularly invoked for help regarding conversion of sinners, return to the Sacraments, expectant mothers, destitute mothers, problems with children, unhappiness in the home, sterility, priests and their work, help for the sick, the missions, real estate, money problems, food for the poor and mental illness.

OFAITHFUL virgin and glorious martyr, St. Philomena, who works so many miracles on behalf of the poor and sorrowing. Have pity on me; thou knowest the multitude and diversity of my needs. Behold me at thy feet, full of misery, but full of hope. I entreat thy charity, O great Saint! Graciously hear me and obtain from God a favorable answer to the request which I now humbly lay before thee. (*Here mention your petition.*) I am firmly convinced that through thy merits, through the scorn, the sufferings, the death thou didst endure, united to the merits of the Passion and Death of Jesus, thy Spouse, I shall obtain what I ask of thee, and in the joy of my heart I will bless God, Who is admirable in His Saints. Amen.

Prayer to St. Rita

Advocate of the Impossible

OHOLY PATRONESS of those in need, St. Rita, whose pleadings before thy Divine Lord are almost irresistible, who for thy lavishness in granting favors hast been called the Advocate of the Hopeless and even of the Impossible; St. Rita, so humble, so pure, so mortified, so patient and of such compassionate love for thy Crucified Jesus that thou couldst obtain from Him whatsoever thou askest, on account of which all confidently have recourse to thee, expecting, if not always relief, at least comfort; be propitious to our petition, showing thy power with God on behalf of thy suppliant; be lavish to us, as thou hast been in so many wonderful cases, for the greater glory of God, for the spreading of thine own devotion, and for the consolation of those who trust in thee. We promise, if our petition is granted, to glorify thee by making known thy favor, to bless and sing thy praises forever. Relying then upon thy merits and power before the Sacred Heart of Jesus, we pray thee grant that ... (*Here make your request.*)

Obtain for us our request

By the singular merits of thy childhood,
By thy perfect union with the Divine Will,
By thy heroic sufferings during thy married life,
By the consolation thou didst experience at the conversion of thy husband,
By the sacrifice of thy children rather than see them grievously offend God,
By thy miraculous entrance into the convent,
By thy severe penances and thrice daily bloody scourgings,
By the suffering caused by the wound thou didst receive from the thorn of thy Crucified Saviour,
By the divine love which consumed thy heart,
By that remarkable devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, on which alone thou didst exist for four years,

By the happiness with which thou didst part from thy trials to join thy Divine Spouse,
By the perfect example thou gavest to people of every state of life.

Pray for us, O holy St. Rita, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let Us Pray

O God, Who in Thine infinite tenderness hast vouchsafed to regard the prayer of Thy servant, Blessed Rita, and dost grant to her supplication that which is impossible to human foresight, skill and efforts, in reward of her compassionate love and firm reliance on Thy promise, have pity on our adversity and succor us in our calamities, that the unbeliever may know Thou art the recompense of the humble, the defense of the helpless, and the strength of those who trust in Thee, through Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen.

St. Rita, Advocate of the Impossible, pray for us!

(*St. Rita was an only child of elderly parents; she decided early to devote her life to God. But her parents made her marry. Her abusive husband was murdered and her two sons, as youths, spoke of avenging his death. She implored God not to allow them to commit this sin. They both died young, and St. Rita miraculously entered the Augustinian Order and became one of its greatest Saints.*)

Prayer to St. Martin de Porres

OGLORIOUS St. Martin de Porres, great Saint of the Dominican Order, look down in mercy upon a poor soul who cries out to thee, and deign to come to my aid in this great need, that I may receive the consolation and succour of Heaven in all my necessities, tribulations and sufferings, but in particular ... (*here mention your intention*). I thank thee, St. Martin de Porres, for all the help that thou hast given me, both now and in the past, and I promise to be ever grateful to thee and to make thee known to all who are in need of thine assistance. Amen.

Prayer of St. Gertrude The Great

This prayer is reputed to be very powerful in releasing souls from Purgatory.

OETERNAL Father, I offer Thee the Most Precious Blood of Thy Divine Son Jesus, in union with all the Masses said throughout the world today, for all the holy souls in Purgatory, and for sinners everywhere: for sinners in the Universal Church, for those in my own home and for those within my family. Amen.

(Repeat as many times as desired.)



Angel Gathering Flowers in a Heavenly Landscape, by Benozzo Gozzoli

Prayer to All the Angels For a Special Favor

BLESS the Lord, all ye His Angels! Thou who art mighty in strength and do His Will, intercede for me at the throne of God. By thine unceasing watchfulness, protect me in every danger of soul and body. Obtain for me the grace of final perseverance, so that after this life, I may be admitted to thy glorious company and sing with thee the praises of God for all eternity.

All ye holy Angels and Archangels, Thrones and Dominations, Principalities and Powers and Virtues of Heaven, Cherubim and Seraphim, and especially thou, my dear Guardian Angel, intercede for me and obtain for me the special favor I now ask. (*Name your intention.*)

Offer the Glory Be three times.

Prayers in Honor of the Seven Sorrows Of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Approved by Pope Pius VII in 1815. (See the "favors" promised by the Blessed Mother at the end of this prayer.)

V. O God, come to my assistance;

R. *O Lord, make haste to help me.*

V. Glory be to the Father ...

R. *As it was in the beginning ...*

1. I grieve for thee, O Mary most sorrowful, in the affliction of thy tender heart at ***the prophecy of the holy and aged Simeon.*** Dear Mother, by thy heart so afflicted, obtain for me the virtue of humility and the Gift of the holy Fear of God. *Hail Mary ...*

2. I grieve for thee, O Mary most sorrowful, in the anguish of thy most affectionate heart during ***the flight into Egypt*** and thy sojourn there. Dear Mother, by thy heart so troubled, obtain for me the virtue of generosity, especially toward the poor, and the Gift of Piety. *Hail Mary ...*

3. I grieve for thee, O Mary most sorrowful, in those anxieties which tried thy troubled heart at ***the loss of thy dear Jesus in the Temple.*** Dear Mother, by thy heart so full of anguish, obtain for me the virtue of chastity and the Gift of Knowledge. *Hail Mary ...*

4. I grieve for thee, O Mary most sorrowful, in the consternation of thy heart at ***meeting Jesus as He carried His Cross.*** Dear Mother, by thy heart so troubled, obtain for me the virtue of patience and the Gift of Fortitude. *Hail Mary ...*

5. I grieve for thee, O Mary most sorrowful, in the martyrdom which thy generous heart endured in ***standing near Jesus in His agony on the Cross.*** Dear Mother, by thy afflicted heart, obtain for me the virtue of temperance and the Gift of Counsel. *Hail Mary ...*

6. I grieve for thee, O Mary most sorrowful, in the wounding of thy compassionate heart, when ***the side of Jesus was struck by the lance before His Body was removed from the Cross.*** Dear Mother, by thy heart thus transfixed, obtain for me the virtue of fraternal charity and the Gift of Understanding. *Hail Mary ...*

7. I grieve for thee, O Mary most sorrowful, for the pangs that wrenched thy most loving heart at ***the burial of Jesus.*** Dear Mother, by thy heart sunk in the bitterness of desolation, obtain for me the virtue of diligence and the Gift of Wisdom. *Hail Mary ...*

Let Us Pray

Let intercession be made for us, we beseech Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, now and at the hour of our death, before the throne of Thy mercy, by the Blessed Virgin Mary, Thy Mother, whose most holy soul was pierced by a sword of sorrow in the hour of Thy bitter Passion, through Thee, O Jesus Christ, Saviour of the world, Who with the Father and the Holy Ghost lives and reigns world without end. Amen.

According to St. Bridget of Sweden (1303-1373), the Blessed Virgin grants the following favors to those who honor her daily by saying seven *Hail Marys*, while meditating on her tears and sorrows: 1. "I will grant peace to their families." 2. "They will be enlightened about the divine Mysteries." 3. "I will console them in their pains, and I will accompany them in their work." 4. "I will give them as much as they ask for, as long so it does not oppose the adorable Will of my divine Son or the sanctification of their souls." 5. "I will defend them in their spiritual battles with the infernal enemy, and I will protect them at every instant of their lives." 6. "I will visibly help them at the moment of their death—they will see the face of their mother." 7. "I have obtained this grace from my divine Son, that those who propagate this devotion to my tears and dolors will be taken directly from this earthly life to eternal happiness, since all their sins will be forgiven and my Son will be their eternal consolation and joy."

Prayer to St. Expeditus

**"Patron of Youth," "Advocate in Urgent
Cases" and "Mediator in Lawsuits"
For a Quick Solution to a Problem,
Or to Cure Procrastination**

St. Expeditus (4th Century) was a young Roman soldier, believed to have been martyred for his Faith at Miletene, Armenia. He is very powerful to bring speedy help in urgent cases.

OST. EXPEDITUS, we humbly beg thee to come to our aid so that thy prompt and certain intercession will obtain for us, from our Divine Lord, the grace of a happy and swift solution to the matter which now concerns us. (*Mention your intention.*) We do so without fear, being fully confident in the supreme wisdom of Our Blessed Lord, and place our trust in Him without reservation, being mindful that His will alone be done. Amen.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, *Pray for us.*

St. Expeditus, our help in urgent matters, *Pray for us.*

(Repeat the above prayer one time and then offer three times the Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be.)

**Short Noveena Litany to
St. Expeditus**

OST. EXPEDITUS, who didst receive from the Lord the crown of righteousness which He has promised to those who love Him, *pray for us.*

Patron of Youth, *pray for us.*

Help of Scholars, *etc.*

Model of Soldiers,

Protector of Travelers,

Advocate of Sinners,

Health of the Sick,

Consolation of the Afflicted,

Mediator of Lawsuits,

Our help in urgent matters,

Who dost teach us never to defer,

Ardent and trusting in prayer,

Most faithful support of those who hope in thee,

Whose protection at the hour of death insures salvation.

Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world, *Spare us, O Lord.*

Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world, *Graciously hear us, O Lord.*

Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world, *Have Mercy on us, O Lord.*

V. Pray for us, St. Expeditus,

R. *That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.*

Let Us Pray

Almighty and Eternal God, Who art the consolation of the afflicted and the support of those in pain, deign to receive the cries of our distress, so that by the intercession and merits of Thy glorious martyr, St. Expeditus, we may joyfully experience in our extreme necessity the help of Thy mercy, through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

(Repeat the above litany one time and then offer one Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be in thanksgiving for any favors received.)

A Most Efficacious Prayer To Our Lady of Mt. Carmel

(Never Found to Fail)

OMOST BEAUTIFUL FLOWER of Mount Carmel, Fruitful Vine, Splendor of Heaven, Blessed Mother of the Son of God, Immaculate Virgin, assist me in this my necessity. *(Mention your intention.)* O Star of the Sea, help me and show mein this that thou art my Mother.

O Holy Mary, Mother of God, Queen of Heaven and Earth, I humbly beseech thee, from the bottom of my heart, to succour me in this necessity; there are none that can withstand thy power. O, show me in this that thou art my Mother.

O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee. *(3 times).*

Sweet Mother, I place this cause in thy hands. *(3 times).*

It is suggested to offer three times the *Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be* in thanksgiving.

— Part Three —
FAVORITE PRAYERS



The Holy Spirit, by Corrado Giaquinto

A Daily Consecration To the Holy Spirit

OMOST Holy Spirit, receive the consecration that I make of my entire being. From this moment on, come into every area of my life and into each of my actions. Thou art my Light, my Guide, my Strength and the sole desire of my heart. I abandon myself without reserve to Thy divine action, and I desire to be ever docile to Thine inspirations. O Holy Spirit, transform me with and through Mary into “another Christ Jesus,” for the glory of the Father and the salvation of the world. Amen.

Dedication Prayer Of St. Colette

OBLESSED JESUS, I dedicate myself to Thee in health, in illness, in my life and in my death, in all my desires, in all my deeds, so that I may never work henceforth except for Thy glory, for the salvation of souls, and for that which Thou hast chosen me. From this moment on, Dearest Lord, there is nothing which I am not prepared to undertake for love of Thee.

—Saint Colette of Jesus (1381-1447)
Reformer of the Poor Clares

A Morning Offering

OMY JESUS, here is my tongue, that Thou mayest watch over it, that it may not utter more than pleases Thee, and that my silence may speak to Thee. Here are my ears, that they may listen only to the voice of duty and to Thy Voice, O Jesus! Here are my eyes, that they may not cease to behold Thee in every face and in every work. Here are my hands and my feet, that Thou mayest make them agile, that they may be riveted to Thy service alone and to the execution of Thy desires. Here are my thoughts, that Thy Light may possess them. Here is my heart, that Thy Love, O Jesus, may reign and rest in it!

—Sister Mary of the Holy Trinity
Poor Clare of Jerusalem

A Prayer of St. Ignatius Loyola (1491-1556)

DEAREST LORD, teach me to be generous. Teach me to serve Thee as Thou deservest: to give and not to count the cost; to fight and not to heed the wounds; to toil and not to seek for rest; to labor and not to seek reward, save that of knowing that I do Thy Will, O God.

An Act of Oblation

OETERNAL FATHER, we offer Thee the Blood, the Passion and the Death of Jesus Christ, the sorrows of Mary most holy and of Saint Joseph, in satisfaction for our sins, for the aid of the Holy Souls in Purgatory, for the needs of Holy Mother Church and for the conversion of sinners. Amen.

Prayer to Mary Mistress of the Angels

Given by Mary to a Bernardine Sister approximately 1937 and urged fervently by Our Lady to be printed and distributed.

OEXALTED QUEEN of Heaven, Supreme Mistress of the Angels, who from the beginning has received from God the power and the commission to crush the serpent’s head, we pray thee humbly, send down thy Holy Legions, that they, under thy command and power, may pursue the spirits of Hell, everywhere wage war against them, defeat their boldness and thrust them into the abyss of Hell.

“Who is like unto God?” “Holy Angels and Archangels, defend us and protect us!” “O kind and tender Mother, thou shalt ever remain our love and our hope.” Amen.

Indulgenced Prayer to Mary “Mother of Good Counsel”

OMOST GLORIOUS VIRGIN, chosen from among all others by an eternal decree to be the Mother of the Eternal Word, the Treasury of Divine Graces and the Refuge of Sinners, I, thy most unworthy servant, have recourse to thee, that thou mayest be my tender guide and counsellor in this valley of tears. Through the Precious Blood of thy Son, obtain for me the pardon of my sins, the salvation of my soul, and all things necessary to attain them. Grant also that Holy Church may triumph over her enemies and that the Kingdom of Jesus Christ will soon be extended over the whole earth. I ask all this through thy intercession. Amen.

Blessed Be the Hour

This prayer is reputed to have been composed by St. Colette (1381-1447), Reformer of the Poor Clares. It is piously believed that whoever recites this prayer fifteen times a day from the Feast of St. Andrew (November 30) until Christmas will obtain what is asked.

BLESSED be the hour and the moment in which the Son of God was born of the most pure Virgin Mary, at midnight, in Bethlehem, in piercing cold. In that hour vouchsafe, O my God, to hear my prayer and grant my desires, through the merits of Our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of His blessed Mother. Amen.

A Short Consecration to the Blessed Virgin Mary

By St. Alphonsus Liguori

O HOLY MARY, my Mistress, into thy blessed trust and special keeping, into the bosom of thy tender mercy, I commend my soul and my body this day, every day of my life and at the hour of my death. To thee I entrust all my hopes and consolations, all my trials and miseries, my life and the end of my life, that through thy most holy intercession and thy merits, all my actions may be ordered and disposed according to thy will and that of thy Divine Son. Amen.

Chaplet of the Divine Mercy

Using the Rosary beads, begin by reciting: one Our Father, one Hail Mary and one Apostle's Creed. On the Our Father beads say this prayer, which was given by Our Lord to St. Faustina (1905-1938):

ETERNAL Father, I offer Thee the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Thy dearly beloved Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world.

On the Hail Mary beads say:

FOR the sake of His sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world.

In conclusion, say three times:

HOLY God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us and on the whole world.

Aspirations for any Occasion

We adore Thee, O Christ, and we praise Thee, because of Thy Holy Cross, Thou hast redeemed the world!

Blessed be Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.

Salutations to Mary

These Salutations to Mary were written by St. John Eudes (1601-1680) and promoted in this version by the Servant of God, Father Paul of Moll (1824-1896). The venerable Father Paul assured one of his friends that those who devoutly venerate Mary with these salutations may rely on her powerful protection and blessing. He said further that it is impossible not to be heard favorably when we recite these Salutations to Mary for the conversion of sinners.

Hail Mary, Daughter of God the Father!

Hail Mary, Mother of God the Son!

Hail Mary, Spouse of God the Holy Ghost!

Hail Mary, Temple of the Most Blessed Trinity!

Hail Mary, Pure Lily of the Effulgent Trinity!

Hail Mary, Celestial Rose of the ineffable Love of God!

Hail Mary, Virgin pure and humble, of whom the King of Heaven willed to be born and with thy milk to be nourished!

Hail Mary, Virgin of Virgins!

Hail Mary, Queen of Martyrs, whose soul a sword transfixed!

Hail Mary, Lady most blessed unto whom all power in Heaven and earth is given!

Hail Mary, My Queen and my Mother, my Life, my sweetness and my Hope!

Hail Mary, Mother most Amiable!

Hail Mary, Mother most Admirable!

Hail Mary, Mother of Divine Love!

Hail Mary, IMMACULATE, Conceived without sin!

Hail Mary, Full of Grace, The Lord is with Thee! Blessed art Thou among Women, and Blessed be the Fruit of thy womb, JESUS.

Blessed be thy Spouse, St. Joseph.

Blessed be thy Father, St. Joachim.

Blessed be thy Mother, St. Anne.

Blessed be thy Guardian, St. John.

Blessed be thy Holy Angel, St. Gabriel.

Glory be to God the Father, Who chose thee!

Glory be to God the Son, Who loved thee!

Glory be to God the Holy Ghost, Who espoused thee!

O Glorious Virgin Mary, may all men love and praise thee!

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us and bless us, now and at death, in the Name of JESUS, thy Divine Son! Amen.

Novena of Confidence To the Sacred Heart

O LORD Jesus Christ, to Thy most Sacred Heart I confide this intention (*Name your request*). Only look upon me, then do what Thy love inspires. Let Thy Sacred Heart decide. I count on Thee. I trust in Thee. I throw myself on Thy mercy. O Lord Jesus, Thou wilt not fail me.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, I trust in Thee!

Sacred Heart of Jesus, I believe in Thy love for me!

Sacred Heart of Jesus, Thy kingdom come!

Sacred Heart of Jesus, I have asked Thee for many favors, but I earnestly implore this one. Take it and place it in Thine open Heart. When the Eternal Father looks upon it, He will see it covered with Thy Precious Blood. It will be no longer my prayer, but Thine, O Jesus.

Heart of Jesus, I place all my trust in Thee! Let me not be disappointed. Amen.

Offering of St. Ignatius Loyola

"Suscipe"

TAKE, O Lord, and receive my entire liberty, my memory, my understanding and my whole will. All that I am and all that I possess Thou hast given me: I surrender it all to Thee to be disposed of according to Thy will. Give me only Thy love and Thy grace; with these I will be rich enough and will desire nothing more.

(Those who like this prayer should read The Gift of Oneself by Fr. Joseph Schryvers, C.S.S.R.)

Memorare to Our Lady of The Sacred Heart

REMEMBER, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, the ineffable power which thy Divine Son has given thee over His adorable Heart. Full of confidence in thy merits, we now implore thy protection. O Heavenly Treasurer of the Heart of Jesus, of that Heart which is the inexhaustible source of all graces and which thou dost open when it pleases thee, in order to distribute among men all the treasures of love and mercy, of light and salvation which it contains: grant us, we beseech thee, the favors we request. (Mention your requests.) No, we cannot meet with a refusal, and since thou art our Mother, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, favorably hear and grant our prayers. Amen.

Prayer to One's Patron Saint

GREAT ST. (*Name*), who at my Baptism was chosen as my guardian and under whose patronage I became an adopted child of God and solemnly renounced Satan, his works and allurements, assist me by thy powerful intercession in the fulfillment of these sacred promises. Help me to love God above all things and always to live in the state of grace. Finally, obtain for me the grace of a happy death, so that thou mayest welcome me into Heaven for all eternity. Amen.

Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi

LORD, make me an instrument of Thy peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

 where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

 where there is darkness, light;

 and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that

 I may not so much seek to be

 consoled as to console; to be

 understood as to understand;

 to be loved as to love;

 for it is in giving that we receive;

it is in pardoning that we are

 pardoned;

and it is in dying that we are

 born to eternal life.

Prayer to Christ The King

OCHRIST JESUS, I acknowledge Thee King of the universe. All that has been created has been made for Thee. Exercise over me all Thy sovereign rights.

I renew the promises of my Baptism. I renounce Satan and all his works, and all his pomps, and I promise to live a good Christian life and to do all in my power to procure the triumph of the rights of God and Thy Church.

Divine Heart of Jesus, I offer Thee my poor efforts in order to obtain that all hearts may acknowledge Thy Sacred Royalty, and that thus the Kingdom of Thy peace may be established throughout the universe. Amen.



The Missal, by John William Waterhouse

Aspirations for any Occasion

We adore Thee, O Christ, and we praise Thee, because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

May the Heart of Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament be praised, adored and loved with grateful affection, at every moment, in all the tabernacles of the world, even to the End of Time! Amen.

An Act of Consecration of the Human Race to The Sacred Heart of Jesus

According to former rules governing indulgences, a plenary indulgence could be gained once a month by pious recitation of this prayer and by fulfilling the other requirements for gaining a plenary indulgence.

OMOST sweet Jesus, Redeemer of the human race, look down upon us humbly prostrate before Thine altar. We are Thine, and Thine we wish to be; but to be more surely united with Thee, behold, each one of us freely consecrates himself today to Thy most Sacred Heart. Many indeed have never known Thee; many, too, despising Thy precepts, have rejected Thee. Have mercy on them all, most merciful Jesus, and draw them to Thy Sacred Heart. Be Thou King, O Lord, not only of the faithful who have never forsaken Thee, but also of the prodigal children who have abandoned Thee; grant that they may quickly return to their Father's house, lest they die of wretchedness and hunger. Be Thou King of those who are deceived by erroneous opinions, or whom discord keeps aloof, and call them back to the harbor of truth and unity of faith, so that soon there may be but one flock and one Shepherd. Grant, O Lord, to Thy Church assurance of freedom and immunity from harm; give peace and order to all nations, and make the earth resound from pole to pole with one cry: "Praise be to the Divine Heart that wrought our salvation; to It be glory and honor forever." Amen.

An Act of Reparation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus

According to former rules governing indulgences, a plenary indulgence could be gained once a month by pious recitation of this prayer and by fulfilling the other requirements for gaining a plenary indulgence.

OSWEET JESUS, Whose overflowing charity for men is requited by so much forgetfulness, negligence and contempt, behold us prostrate before Thy altar, eager to repair by a special act of homage the cruel indifference and injuries to which Thy loving Heart is everywhere subject.

Mindful, alas, that we ourselves have had a share in such great indignities, which we now deplore from the bottom of our hearts, we humbly ask Thy pardon and declare our readiness to atone by voluntary expiation, not only for our own personal offenses, but also for the sins of those who, straying far from the path of salvation, refuse in their obstinate infidelity to follow Thee, their Shepherd and Leader, or renouncing the vows of their Baptism, have cast off the sweet yoke of Thy law. We are now resolved to expiate each and every deplorable outrage committed against Thee; we are determined to make amends for the manifold offenses against Christian modesty in unbecoming dress and behavior, for all the foul seductions laid to ensnare the feet of the innocent, for the frequent violation of Sundays and Holy Days and for the shocking blasphemies uttered against Thee and Thy Saints. We wish also to make amends for the insults to which Thy Vicar on earth and Thy priests are subjected, for the profanation, by conscious neglect or terrible acts of sacrilege of the very Sacrament of Thy divine love; and lastly for the public crimes of nations which resist the rights and the teaching authority of the Church which Thou hast founded.

Would, O divine Jesus, we were able to wash away such abominations with our blood. We now offer in reparation for these violations of Thy divine honor, the satisfaction Thou didst once make to Thy eternal Father on the Cross and which Thou dost continue to renew daily on our altars; we offer it in union with the acts of atonement of Thy Virgin Mother and all the Saints and of the pious faithful on earth; and we sincerely promise to make reparation, as far as we can, with the help of Thy grace, for all neglect of Thy great love and for the sins we and others have committed in the past. Henceforth we will live a life of unwavering faith, of purity of conduct, of perfect observance of the precepts of the Gospel, and especially that of charity. We promise, to the best of our power, to prevent others from offending Thee and to bring as many as possible to follow Thee.

O loving Jesus, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, our model in reparation, deign to receive the voluntary offering we make of this act of expiation; and by the crowning gift of perseverance, keep us faithful unto death in our duty and allegiance we owe to Thee, so that we may all one day come to that happy home, where Thou, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, livest and reignest, God, world without end. Amen.

Aspirations for any Occasion

O Sacrament Most Holy, O Sacrament Divine, all praise and all thanksgiving be every moment Thine!

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, I love Thee; please save souls!

The Magnificat

(Words of Our Lady from Luke 1:46-55.)

MY SOUL doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour, because He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid: for behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed, because He that is mighty hath done great things to me, and holy is His Name. And His mercy is from generation unto generations, to them that fear Him.

He hath showed might in His arm: He hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart. He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble. He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He hath sent away empty. He hath received Israel His servant, being mindful of His mercy: as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed forever.

Aspirations for any Occasion

Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

O Queen of the Angels, pray for us!



Virgin and Child, by Giorgione

The Litany of The Blessed Virgin Mary

(The Litany of Loreto)
(For public or private use.)

Lord, have mercy on us.

Christ, have mercy on us.

Lord, have mercy on us. Christ, hear us.

Christ, graciously hear us.

God the Father of Heaven,

Have mercy on us.

God the Son, Redeemer of the world,

Have mercy on us.

God the Holy Ghost,

Have mercy on us.

Holy Trinity, One God,

Have mercy on us.

Holy Mary, pray for us.

Holy Mother of God, pray for us.

Holy Virgin of virgins, etc.

Mother of Christ,

Mother of divine grace,

Mother most pure,

Mother most chaste,

Mother inviolate,

Mother undefiled,

Mother most amiable,

Mother most admirable,

Mother of good counsel,

Mother of our Creator,

Mother of our Saviour,

Virgin most prudent,

Virgin most venerable,

Virgin most renowned,

Virgin most powerful,

Virgin most merciful,

Virgin most faithful,

Mirror of Justice,

Seat of Wisdom,

Cause of our Joy,

Spiritual Vessel,

Vessel of Honor,

Singular Vessel of Devotion,

Mystical Rose,

Tower of David,

Tower of Ivory,

House of Gold,

Ark of the Covenant,

Gate of Heaven,

Morning Star,

Health of the Sick,

Refuge of Sinners,

Comforter of the Afflicted,

Help of Christians,

Queen of Angels,

Queen of Patriarchs,

Queen of Prophets,

Queen of Apostles,

Queen of Martyrs,

Queen of Confessors,

Queen of Virgins,

Queen of all Saints,

Queen Conceived without Original Sin,

Queen Assumed into Heaven,

Queen of the Most Holy Rosary,

Queen of Peace,

Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world,

Spare us, O Lord.

Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world,

Graciously hear us, O Lord.

Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world,
Have mercy on us.

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God,
R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let Us Pray

Grant, we beseech Thee, O Lord God, that we Thy servants may enjoy perpetual health of mind and body, and by the glorious intercession of the Blessed Mary, ever Virgin, be delivered from present sorrow and enjoy everlasting happiness. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Prayer to St. Joseph

Prescribed by Pope Leo XIII, for the month of October, after the recitation of the Rosary and the Litany of Our Lady, but it can be said fruitfully at any time after praying to Mary.

UNTO THEE, O blessed Joseph, do we fly in our tribulation, and having implored the help of thy holy Spouse, we now also confidently seek thy protection. By that affection which united thee to the Immaculate Virgin, Mother of God, and by thy fatherly love for the Child Jesus, we humbly beg thee to look down with compassion upon the inheritance which Jesus Christ has purchased with His blood and in our need to help us by thy powerful intercession.

Do thou, O prudent Guardian of the Holy Family, watch over the chosen people of Jesus Christ. Keep us, O loving father, safe from all error and corruption. O great protector, from thy place in Heaven, graciously help us in our contest against the powers of darkness. And as of old thou didst rescue the Child Jesus from the danger of death, so now defend God's Holy Church from the snares of the enemy and from all adversity. Extend to each one of us thy continual protection, that led on by thine example and strengthened by thine aid, we may live and die in holiness and obtain everlasting happiness in Heaven. Amen.

Litany of St. Joseph

(For public or private use.)

Lord, have mercy on us.

Christ, have mercy on us.

Lord, have mercy on us. Christ, hear us.

Christ, graciously hear us.

God the Father of Heaven,

Have mercy on us.

God the Son, Redeemer of the world,

Have mercy on us.

God the Holy Ghost,

Have mercy on us.

Holy Trinity, One God,

Have mercy on us.

Holy Mary, pray for us.

St. Joseph, pray for us.

Renowned Offspring of David, etc.

Light of Patriarchs,

Spouse of the Mother of God,

Chaste Guardian of the Virgin,

Foster Father of the Son of God,

Diligent Protector of Christ,

Head of the Holy Family,

Joseph most just,

Joseph most chaste,

Joseph most prudent,

Joseph most strong,

Joseph most obedient,

Joseph most faithful,

Mirror of Patience,

Lover of Poverty,

Model of Artisans,

Glory of domestic life,

Guardian of Virgins,

Pillar of Families,

Solace of the Afflicted,

Hope of the Sick,

Patron of the Dying,

Terror of Demons,

Protector of Holy Church,

Lamb of God, Who takest away
the sins of the world,

Spare us, O Lord!

Lamb of God, Who takest away

the sins of the world,
Graciously hear us, O Lord!
Lamb of God, Who takest away
the sins of the world,
Have mercy on us.

V. He made him the lord of His household.
R. *And prince over all His possessions.*

Let Us Pray

OGOD, Who in Thine ineffable Providence didst vouchsafe to choose Blessed Joseph to be the spouse of Thy most holy Mother, grant, we beseech Thee, that we may have for our advocate in Heaven him whom we venerate as our protector on earth, Who livest and reignest world without end. Amen.

The Te Deum

(A Hymn of Thanksgiving)

1. We praise Thee, O God; we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord.
2. Thee, the Father everlasting, all the earth doth worship.
3. To Thee all the Angels, to Thee the heavens, and all the Powers,
4. To Thee the Cherubim and Seraphim cry out without ceasing:
5. "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts."
6. Full are the heavens and the earth of the majesty of Thy glory.
7. Thee, the glorious choir of the Apostles,
8. Thee, the admirable company of the Prophets,
9. Thee, the white-robed army of martyrs doth praise.
0. Thee, the Holy Church throughout the world doth confess:
 1. The Father, of incomprehensible majesty,
 2. Thine adorable, true, and only Son,
 3. And the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete.
 4. Thou, O Christ, art the King of glory.
 5. Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father.
 6. Thou, having taken upon Thee to deliver man, didst not disdain the Virgin's womb.
 7. Thou, having overcome the sting of death, hast opened to believers the Kingdom of Heaven.
 8. Thou sittest at the right hand of God, in the glory of the Father.
 9. Thou, we believe, art the Judge to come.
0. We beseech Thee, therefore, to help Thy servants, whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy Precious Blood.
 1. Make them to be numbered with Thy Saints in glory everlasting.
 2. O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance,
 3. And govern them and exalt them forever.
 4. Day by day we bless Thee,
 5. And we praise Thy name forever; yea, forever and ever.
 6. Vouchsafe, O Lord, this day to keep us without sin.
 7. Have mercy on us, O Lord; have mercy on us.
 8. Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, as we have trusted in Thee.
 9. In Thee, O Lord, have I trusted: let me not be confounded forever.
- V. Let us bless the Father and the Son with the Holy Spirit.
R. *Let us praise and exalt Him forever.*
- V. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, in the firmament of Heaven.
R. *And worthy of praise, and glorious, and exalted above all forever.*
- V. O Lord, hear my prayer.
R. *And let my cry come to Thee.*
- V. The Lord be with thee.
R. *And with thy spirit.*

Let Us Pray

O God, of Thy mercies there is no number, and of Thy goodness the treasure is infinite; we render thanks to Thy most gracious Majesty for the gifts Thou hast bestowed upon us, evermore imploring Thy clemency, that as Thou dost grant the petitions of them that ask Thee, Thou mayest never forsake them, but may prepare them for the rewards to come. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Morning Prayers

An Act of Faith in

The Presence of God

MY GOD, I firmly believe that Thou art here present and dost plainly see me, that Thou dost observe all my actions, all my thoughts, and the most secret movements of my heart. I acknowledge that I am not worthy to come into Thy presence, nor to lift up my eyes to Thee, because I have so often sinned against Thee. But Thy goodness and mercy invite me to come to Thee; help me, I implore Thee, with Thy holy grace, and teach me to pray to Thee as I ought.

An Act of Adoration And Thanksgiving

ETERNAL God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the beginning and end of all things, in Whom we live and move and have our being, prostrate before Thee in body and soul, I adore Thee with the most profound humility. I bless Thee and give Thee thanks for all the benefits Thou hast conferred upon me, especially that Thou hast created me out of nothing, made me after Thine own image and likeness, redeemed me with the Precious Blood of Thy Son, and sanctified me with Thy Holy Spirit. I thank Thee that Thou hast called me into Thy Church, helped me by Thy grace, admitted me to Thy Sacraments, watched over me by Thy special Providence, blessed me, notwithstanding my sins and unworthiness, with Thy continuing and gracious protection, and for all the innumerable blessings which I owe to Thine undeserved bounty. I thank Thee especially for having preserved me during the past night and for bringing me in safety to the beginning of another day. What return can I make to Thee, my God, for all that Thou hast done for me? I will bless Thy Holy Name and serve Thee all the days of my life. Bless the Lord, my soul, and let all that is within me praise His Holy Name.

An Act of Faith

MY GOD, I firmly believe in all that Thy Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church approves and teaches, since it is Thou, the Infallible Truth, Who hast revealed it to Thy Church.

An Act of Hope

MY GOD, with a firm confidence I hope in Thee, that Thou wilt grant me, through the merits of Jesus Christ, the assistance of Thy grace, and that after my keeping Thy commandments, Thou wilt bestow on me life everlasting, according to Thy promises, Thou Who art almighty and Whose word is truth!

An Act of Charity

MY GOD, I love Thee with my whole heart, with my whole soul, with all my strength, and above all things, because Thou art infinitely good and infinitely lovable. Also, for love of Thee do I love my neighbor as myself.

An Act of Contrition, With Good Resolutions

Here call to mind the chief sins of your past life and make resolutions against the temptations and dangerous occasions you may meet with this day.

MY GOD, how little have I served Thee in time past! How greatly have I sinned against Thee! I acknowledge my iniquity, and my sin is always before me. But I repent, O Lord, I repent. I am heartily sorry that I have spent that time in offending Thee which Thou hast given to me to be employed in Thy service, in advancing the good of my own soul and obtaining everlasting life. I am sorry above all things that I have offended Thee, because Thou art infinitely good and sin is infinitely displeasing to Thee. I desire to love Thee with my whole heart, and I firmly purpose, by the help of Thy grace, to serve Thee more faithfully in the time to come.

Accept, I implore Thee, the offering I now make to Thee of the remainder of my life. I renew the vows and promises made in my Baptism. I renounce the devil and all his works, the world and all its pomps. I now begin and will endeavor to spend this day according to Thy holy Will, performing all my actions in a manner pleasing to Thee. I will take particular care to avoid the failings I am so apt to commit and to exercise the virtues most agreeable to my state and employment.

To Our Guardian Angel

ANGEL of God, who art appointed by divine mercy to be my guardian, enlighten and protect, direct and govern me this day. Amen.

Evening Prayers

The official evening prayer of the Church, and the best of all, is Compline. Here follows, however, an alternative form of evening prayers. (Note: The cross signifies that one is supposed to make the Sign of the Cross at this point in the prayer.)

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Blessed be the holy and undivided Trinity, now and for ever. Amen.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Apostles' Creed.

V. Come, Holy Ghost, fill the hearts of Thy faithful,

R. And kindle in them the fire of Thy love.

V. Send forth Thy Spirit, and they shall be created,

R. And Thou shalt renew the face of the earth.

Let Us Pray

O God, Who hast instructed the hearts of the Faithful by the light of the Holy Ghost, grant us, we beseech Thee, that by the gift of the same Spirit we may always be truly wise and ever rejoice in His consolation, through Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Place yourself in the presence of God and give Him thanks for all the benefits which you have received from Him, particularly this day.

O MY GOD, I firmly believe that Thou art here present and dost plainly see me, and that Thou dost observe all my actions, all my thoughts and the most secret motions of my heart. Thou dost watch over me with an incomparable love, every moment bestowing favors and preserving me from evil. Blessed be Thy Holy Name, and may all creatures bless Thy goodness for the benefits which I have ever received from Thee, and particularly this day. May the Saints and Angels supply my defect in rendering Thee due thanks. Never permit me to be so base and wicked as to repay Thy goodness with ingratitude and Thy blessings with offenses and injuries.

You should here ask of Our Lord Jesus Christ for the grace to discover the sins which you have committed this day and beg of Him a true sorrow for them and sincere repentance.

O MY LORD JESUS CHRIST, Judge of the living and the dead, before Whom I must appear one day to give an exact account of my whole life, enlighten me, I implore Thee, and give me a humble and contrite heart, that I may see wherein I have offended Thine infinite Majesty, and judge myself now with such a just severity, that then Thou mayest judge me with mercy and clemency.

You should endeavor, as far as possible, to put yourself in the disposition in which you desire to be found at the hour of death.

O MY GOD, I accept death as a homage and an adoration which I owe to Thy divine Majesty and as a punishment justly due to my sins, in union with the death of my Dear Redeemer and as the only means of coming to Thee, my beginning and Last End.

I firmly believe all the sacred truths which the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church believes and teaches, because Thou hast revealed them. And by the assistance of Thy holy grace, I am resolved to live and to die in communion with this, Thy Church.

Relying upon Thy goodness, power and promises, I hope to obtain pardon of my sins and life everlasting, through the merits of Thy Son Jesus Christ, my only Redeemer, and by the intercession of His Blessed Mother and all the Saints.

I love Thee with all my heart and soul, and I desire to love Thee as the blessed do in Heaven. I adore all the designs of Thy Divine Providence, resigning myself entirely to Thy holy Will. I also love my neighbor for Thy sake, as I love myself.

I sincerely forgive all who have injured me, and ask pardon of all whom I have injured.

I renounce the devil, and all his works; the world, and all its pomps; the flesh, and all its temptations.

I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ.

Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit.

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, I give thee my heart and my soul.

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, assist me in my last agony.

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, may I breathe forth my soul in peace with thee. Amen.

Lord Jesus, receive my soul.

May the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Joseph and all the Saints pray for us to Our Lord, that we may be preserved this night from sin and all evils. Amen.

O Blessed St. Michael, defend us in the day of battle, that we may not be lost at the dreadful Judgment. Amen.

O Angel of God, who art appointed by divine mercy to be my guardian, enlighten and protect, direct and govern me this night. Amen.

May Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins and bring us to life everlasting. Amen.

May the Almighty and Merciful Lord grant us  pardon, absolution and remission of all our sins. Amen.

— *End of Evening Prayers —*

Anima Christi

Soul of Christ, sanctify me;

Body of Christ, save me;

Blood of Christ, inebriate me;

Water from the side of Christ, wash me.

Passion of Christ, strengthen me;

O good Jesus, hear me;

Within Thy wounds hide me;

Suffer me not to be separated from Thee.

From the malignant enemy defend me;

In the hour of my death, call me,

And bid me come to Thee,

That, with Thy Saints, I may praise Thee forever and ever. Amen.

Aspirations for any Occasion

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us!

My Jesus, I trust in Thee!

The Divine Praises

Traditionally recited publicly at the end of Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, just before the Host is returned to the tabernacle. It may be recited privately at any time as an act of praise and thanksgiving.

BLESSED be God.

Blessed be His Holy Name.
Blessed be Jesus Christ, true God and true man.
Blessed be the Name of Jesus.
Blessed be His Most Sacred Heart.
Blessed be His Most Precious Blood.
Blessed be Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.
Blessed be the great Mother of God, Mary most holy.
Blessed be her holy and Immaculate Conception.
Blessed be her glorious Assumption.
Blessed be the name of Mary, Virgin and Mother.
Blessed be St. Joseph, her most chaste spouse.
Blessed be God, in His Angels and in His Saints.

Prayer Before a Crucifix

BEHOLD, O kind and most sweet Jesus, before Thy face I humbly kneel, and with the most fervent desire of my soul, I pray and beseech Thee to impress upon my heart lively sentiments of faith, hope and charity, true contrition for my sins and a firm purpose of amendment, while with deep affection and grief of soul, I ponder within myself, mentally contemplating Thy five most precious wounds, having before my eyes the words which David the Prophet spoke concerning Thee: "They have pierced my hands and my feet; they have numbered all my bones." (*Psalm 21:17-18*).



The Children of Fatima

The Five Fatima Prayers

The Pardon Prayer

MY GOD, I believe, I adore, I hope and I love Thee! I ask pardon of Thee for those who do not believe, do not adore, do not hope and do not love Thee.

The Angel's Prayer

MOST Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, I adore Thee profoundly. I offer Thee the Most Precious Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, present in all the tabernacles of the world, in reparation for the outrages, sacrileges and indifferences by which He Himself is offended. And through the infinite merits of His Most Sacred Heart, and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I beg of Thee the conversion of poor sinners.

Blessed Sacrament Prayer

OMOST Holy Trinity, I adore Thee! My God, my God, I love Thee in the Most Blessed Sacrament!

Sacrifice Prayer

Our Lady of Fatima said: Sacrifice yourselves for sinners, and say many times, especially whenever you make some sacrifice:

OJESUS, I offer this for love of Thee, for the conversion of sinners, and in reparation for the sins committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

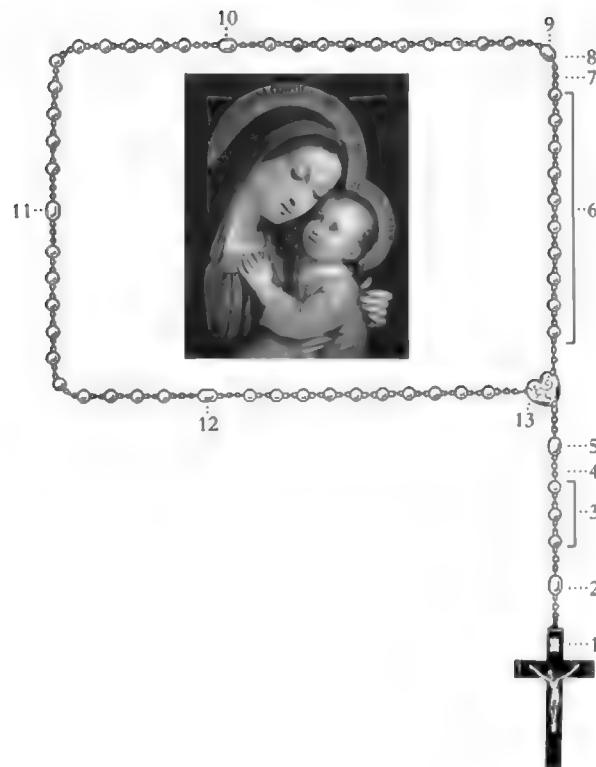
O My Jesus

To be said after the Glory Be following each decade of the Rosary.

OMY JESUS, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of Hell, lead all souls to Heaven, especially those who are most in need of Thy mercy.

—End of the Five Fatima Prayers —

How to Pray the Rosary



1. Make the *Sign of the Cross* and say *The Apostles' Creed*.
2. Say the *Our Father*.
3. Say 3 *Hail Mary's*.
4. Say the *Glory be to the Father*.
5. Announce the First Mystery; then say the *Our Father*.
6. Say 10 *Hail Mary's*.
7. Say the *Glory be to the Father*.
8. Say the *O My Jesus*.
9. Announce the Second Mystery; then say the *Our Father*, 10 *Hail Mary's*, *Glory be* and *O My Jesus*.
10. Announce the Third Mystery; then say the *Our Father*, 10 *Hail Mary's*, *Glory be* and *O My Jesus*.
1. Announce the Fourth Mystery; then say the *Our Father*, 10 *Hail Mary's*, *Glory be* and *O My Jesus*.
2. Announce the Fifth Mystery; then say the *Our Father*, 10 *Hail Mary's*, *Glory be* and *O My Jesus*.
3. Conclude by saying the *Hail, Holy Queen*.
4. Follow with *Prayer After the Rosary*, if desired. (See opposite page.)

The Mysteries of the Rosary

*To be meditated upon while praying the Rosary.
(The classic 15 Mysteries given by Our Lady to St. Dominic.)*

THE JOYFUL MYSTERIES

Said on Mondays and Thursdays and the Sundays from the First Sunday of Advent until Lent.

1st Joyful Mystery: The Annunciation

2nd Joyful Mystery: The Visitation

3rd Joyful Mystery: The Nativity

4th Joyful Mystery: The Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple

5th Joyful Mystery: The Finding of Our Lord in the Temple

THE SORROWFUL MYSTERIES

Said on Tuesdays and Fridays and daily during Lent.

1st Sorrowful Mystery: The Agony in the Garden

2nd Sorrowful Mystery: The Scourging at the Pillar

3rd Sorrowful Mystery: The Crowning with Thorns

4th Sorrowful Mystery: The Carrying of the Cross

5th Sorrowful Mystery: The Crucifixion and Death of Our Lord on the Cross

THE GLORIOUS MYSTERIES

Said on Wednesdays and Saturdays and the Sundays from Easter until Advent.

1st Glorious Mystery: The Resurrection of Our Lord

2nd Glorious Mystery: The Ascension of Our Lord

3rd Glorious Mystery: The Descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles

4th Glorious Mystery: The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into Heaven

5th Glorious Mystery: The Coronation of Our Lady as Queen of Heaven and Earth

THE LUMINOUS MYSTERIES*

Said on Thursdays, with Saturday being changed to a day for praying the Joyful Mysteries.

1st Luminous Mystery: The Baptism in the Jordan

2nd Luminous Mystery: Our Lord's Self-manifestation at the Wedding of Cana

3rd Luminous Mystery: The proclamation of the Kingdom of God and call to conversion

4th Luminous Mystery: The Transfiguration

5th Luminous Mystery: The Institution of the Eucharist, as the sacramental expression of the Paschal Mystery

* Publisher's Note: The Luminous Mysteries were added to this book in 2008 as required by Most Reverend Thomas G. Doran, Ordinary of the Diocese of Rockford, as a condition for granting the Imprimatur. The Luminous Mysteries were introduced by Pope John Paul II in 2002 as an optional addition to the traditional Rosary.

Prayer after the Rosary

O GOD, Whose only-begotten Son, by His life, death and Resurrection, has purchased for us the rewards of eternal salvation, grant, we beseech Thee, that, meditating upon these Mysteries of the Most Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we may both imitate what they contain and obtain what they promise. Through the same Christ Our Lord. Amen.

— Part Four —
SPECIAL PRAYERS

**Prayer for the Seven Gifts
Of the Holy Ghost**

OLORD JESUS CHRIST, Who before ascending into Heaven didst promise to send the Holy Ghost to finish Thy work in the souls of Thine Apostles and Disciples, deign to grant the same Holy Spirit to me, that He may perfect in my soul the work of Thy grace and Thy love. Grant me the spirit of wisdom, that I may despise the perishable things of this world and aspire only after the things that are eternal; the spirit of understanding, to enlighten my mind with the light of Thy divine truth; the spirit of counsel, that I may ever choose the surest way of pleasing God and gaining Heaven; the spirit of fortitude, that I may bear my cross with Thee and that I may overcome with courage all the obstacles that oppose my salvation; the spirit of knowledge, that I may know God and know myself and grow perfect in the science of the Saints; the spirit of piety, that I may find the service of God sweet and amiable; the spirit of fear, that I may be filled with a loving reverence towards God and may dread in any way to displease Him. Mark me, dear Lord, with the sign of Thy true disciples, and animate me in all things with Thy Spirit. Amen.

**Prayer for Direction in the
Choice of a State of Life**

OALMIGHTY GOD, Whose wise and amiable providence watches over every human event, be Thou my light and my counsel in all my undertakings, particularly in the choice of a state of life. I know that on this important step my sanctification and salvation in great measure depend. I know that I am incapable of discerning what may be best for me; therefore, I cast myself into Thy arms, beseeching Thee, my God, Who hast sent me into this world only to know, love and serve Thee, to direct by Thy grace every moment and action of my life to the glorious end of my creation. I renounce most sincerely every other wish than to fulfill Thy designs on my soul, whatever they may be, and I beseech Thee to grant me that grace which, by imbibing the true spirit of a Christian, will enable me to qualify myself for any state of life to which Thine adorable Providence may call me. O my God, whenever it may become my duty to make a choice, do Thou be my Light and my Counsel, and mercifully *make known to me the way wherein I should walk, for I have lifted up my soul to Thee*. Preserve me from listening to the suggestions of my own self-love, or worldly prudence, in prejudice to Thy holy inspirations. Let *Thy good Spirit lead me into the right way*, and let Thine adorable providence place me, not where I may naturally feel inclined to go, but where all things may be most conducive to Thy glory and to the good of my soul.

Mary, Mother of Good Counsel, Seat of Wisdom and Help of Christians, pray for me.

A Prayer for Priests

OJESUS, Eternal Priest, keep all Thy priests within the shelter of Thy Sacred Heart, where none may harm them.

Keep unstained their anointed hands, which daily touch Thy Sacred Body. Keep unsullied their lips purpled with Thy Precious Blood.

Keep pure and unearthly their hearts sealed with the sublime marks of Thy glorious priesthood.

Let Thy holy love surround them and shield them from the world's contagion.

Bless their labors with abundant fruit, and may the souls to whom they have ministered here below be their joy and consolation and in Heaven their beautiful and everlasting crown. Amen.

O Mary, Queen of the clergy, pray for us, and obtain for us a number of holy priests.

**Prayer to Our Lady of Guadalupe
For the Conversion of the
Americas and of the World**

OHOLY MARY, Virgin Mother of God, who as Our Lady of Guadalupe didst aid in the conversion of Mexico from paganism in a most miraculous way, we now beseech thee to bring about in these our times the early conversion of our modern world from its present neo-paganism to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of thy divine Son, Jesus Christ, starting in the Americas and extending throughout the entire world, so that soon there may be truly "one fold and one shepherd," with all governments recognizing the reign of thy Son, Jesus Christ the King. This we ask of the Eternal Father, through Jesus Christ His Son Our Lord and by thy powerful intercession—all for the salvation of souls, the triumph of the Church and peace in the world. Amen.

A Morning Offering

By St. Therese of Lisieux

OMY GOD! I offer Thee all my actions of this day for the intentions and for the glory of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. I desire to sanctify every beat of my heart, my every thought, my simplest works, by uniting them to Its infinite merits; and I wish to make reparation for my sins by casting them into the furnace of Its Merciful Love.

O my God! I ask of Thee for myself and for those whom I hold dear, the grace to fulfill perfectly Thy Holy Will, to accept for love of Thee the joys and sorrows of this passing life, so that we may one day be united together in Heaven for all Eternity. Amen.

Novena Rose Prayer

O LITTLE Therese of the Child Jesus, please pick for me a rose from the heavenly gardens and send it to me as a message of love.

O LITTLE Flower of Jesus, ask God today to grant the favors I now place with confidence in your hands ... (*Mention your requests*).

S T. THERESE, help me to always believe, as you did, in God's great love for me, so that I might imitate your "Little Way" each day. Amen.

Prayer to Our Lady Of Mental Peace

O MOTHER of tranquility, Mother of hope, Our Lady of Mental Peace, we reach out to thee for what is needful in our weakness. Teach a searching heart that God's love is unchanging, that human love begins and grows by touching His Love.

Our Lady of Mental Peace, pray for us!

Night Prayer for Daily Neglects

E TERNAL FATHER, I offer Thee the Sacred Heart of Jesus, with all its love, all its sufferings and all its merits ...

To expiate all the sins I have committed this day and during all my life.

Glory Be ...

Eternal Father ... (*Repeat the beginning prayer*.)

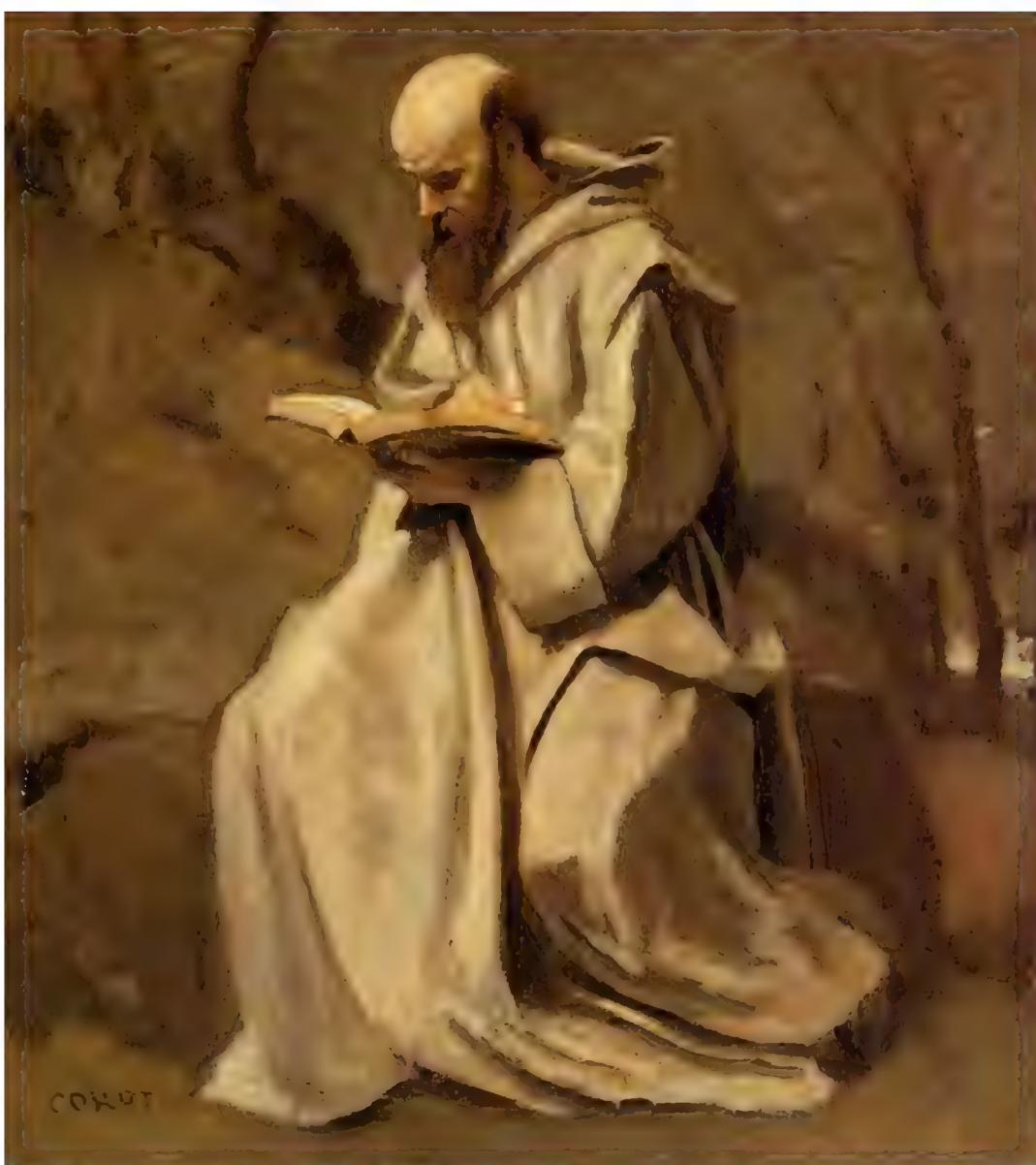
To purify the good I have done badly this day and during all my life.

Glory Be ...

Eternal Father ... (*Repeat the beginning prayer*.)

To supply for the good I ought to have done and that I have neglected this day and during all my life.

Glory Be ...



Monk in White, Seated, Reading, by Camille Corot

Prayer for Detachment From Earthly Goods

O JESUS, Who didst choose a life of poverty and obscurity, grant me the grace to keep my heart detached from the transitory things of this world. Be Thou henceforth my only treasure, for Thou art infinitely more precious than all other possessions. My heart is too solicitous for the vain and fleeting things of earth. Make me always mindful of Thy warning words: "What does it profit a man if he gain the whole world, but suffer the loss of his own soul?" Grant me the grace to keep Thy holy example always before my eyes, that I may despise the nothingness of this world and make Thee the object of all my desires and affections. Amen.

Prayer to St. Joseph For Purity

O GUARDIAN of virgins and holy father St. Joseph, into whose faithful custody Christ Jesus, Innocence Itself, and Mary, Virgin of virgins, were committed, I pray and beseech thee, by these dear pledges, Jesus and Mary, that being preserved from all impurity, I may with spotless mind, pure heart and chaste body ever most chastely serve Jesus and Mary all the days of my life. Amen.

Prayer to St. Aloysius For Purity

SAINST ALOYSIUS, adorned with angelic virtues, I commend to thee most earnestly the chastity of my mind and body. I pray thee, by thine angelic purity, to command me to the Immaculate Lamb, Jesus Christ, and to His most holy Mother, the Virgin of virgins, and to protect me from every grievous sin. Permit me not to defile myself by any spot of impurity; and when thou seest me in temptation or in danger of sin, banish far from my heart every unclean thought and desire. Awaken in me the thought of eternity and of Jesus Crucified; imprint deeply in my heart a lively sense of the holy fear of God; set me on fire with the love of God, and grant me the grace to imitate thee on earth, that I may enjoy the possession of God with thee in Heaven. Amen.

Prayer to Overcome Sloth And Lukewarmness

OMY GOD, I know well that so negligent a life as mine cannot please Thee. I know that by my lukewarmness I have closed the door to the graces which Thou dost desire to bestow upon me. O my God, do not reject me, as I deserve, but continue to be merciful toward me, and I will make great efforts to amend and to arise from this miserable state. In the future I will be more careful to overcome my passions, to follow Thine inspirations, and never through slothfulness will I omit my duties, but will ever strive to fulfill them with greater diligence and fidelity. In short, I will from this time forward do all I can to please Thee and will neglect nothing which I know to be pleasing to Thee.

Since Thou, O my Jesus, hast been so liberal with Thy graces toward me and hast deigned to give Thy Blood and Thy Life for me, I am sorry for having acted with so little generosity toward Thee, Who art worthy of all honor and all love. But O my Jesus, Thou knowest my weakness. Help me with Thy powerful grace; in Thee I confide. O Immaculate Virgin Mary, help me to overcome myself and to become a Saint. Amen.

Prayer to Overcome Bad Habits

BEHOLD me, O my God, at Thy feet! I do not deserve mercy, but O, my Redeemer, the blood which Thou hast shed for me encourages me and obliges me to hope for it. How often have I offended Thee, repented, and yet have I again fallen into the same sin.

O my God, I wish to amend, and in order to be faithful to Thee, I will place all my confidence in Thee. I will, whenever I am tempted, instantly have recourse to Thee. Hitherto, I have trusted in my own promises and resolutions and have neglected to recommend myself to Thee in my temptations. This has been the cause of my repeated failures. From this day forward, be Thou, O Lord, my strength, and thus shall I be able to do all things, for "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me." Amen.

Prayer to Overcome a Vice

OGOD, who didst break the chains of blessed Peter the Apostle and didst make him come forth from prison unscathed, loose the bonds of Thy servant, (*Name*), held in captivity by the vice of _____, and by the merits of the same Apostle, do Thou grant me (*him, her*) to be delivered from its tyranny. Remove from my (*his, her*) heart all excessive love of sensual pleasures and gratifications, so that living soberly, justly and piously, I (*he, she*) may attain to everlasting life with Thee. Amen.

Prayer Against Evil Thoughts

ALMIGHTY and merciful God, look favorably upon my prayer and free my heart from temptation to evil thoughts, that I may deserve to be accounted a worthy dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. Shed upon my heart the brightness of Thy grace, that I may ever think thoughts worthy of Thy Divine Majesty and that are pleasing to Thee, and ever sincerely love Thee, through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

A Prayer for Grace

OMY GOD, remember that moment when, for the first time, Thou didst pour Thy grace into my soul, washing me from Original Sin, that Thou might receive me into the number of Thy children. O God, Thou Who art my Father, grant me in Thine infinite mercy, through the merits and the Blood of Jesus Christ and through the sorrows

of the Holy Virgin Mary, the graces which Thou dost desire that I should receive this day for Thy greater glory and my salvation. Amen.

O Heart of Love, I place all my trust in Thee, for though I fear all things from my own weakness, I hope all things from Thy goodness.

O purest Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary, obtain for me from Jesus a pure and humble heart. Amen.



The Death of St. Joseph

Prayer to St. Joseph For a Happy Death

OGLORIOUS ST. JOSEPH, behold I choose thee today for my special patron in life and at the hour of my death. Preserve and increase in me the spirit of prayer and fervor in the service of God. Remove far from me every kind of sin, and obtain for me that my death may not come upon me unawares, but that I may have time to confess my sins sacramentally and to bewail them with a most perfect understanding and a most sincere contrition, in order that I may breathe forth my soul into the hands of Jesus and Mary. Amen.

Acceptance of Death

OLORD GOD, I look ahead to the end of my life, and with true contrition for having offended Thee, I accept in advance, from Thy loving hands, whatever death it will please Thee to send me. I accept this death with all its pains, anguish and suffering, in reparation for my sins and for love of Thee. I rely on Thine all-powerful grace to see me through my last hours, moment by moment, and to bring me home to a happy eternity with Thee forever. Through Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen.

O Mary, Mother of departing souls, pray for us.

St. Joseph, Patron of a Happy Death, pray for us.

Prayer for Those in Their Agony

OMOST merciful Jesus, lover of souls, I beseech Thee, by the agony of Thy most Sacred Heart and by the sorrows of Thine Immaculate Mother, cleanse in Thine own blood the sinners of the whole world who are now in their agony and are to die this day. Amen.

Heart of Jesus, Most Merciful Saviour, who was once in the agony of death, have pity on the dying. Amen.

Prayer to Our Lord on The Cross for a Happy Hour Of Death

OMY crucified Jesus, mercifully accept the prayer which I now make to Thee for help in the moment of my death, when at its approach all my senses shall fail me.

When, therefore, O sweetest Jesus, my weary and downcast eyes can no longer look up to Thee, be mindful of the loving gaze which now I turn on Thee, and have mercy on me.

When my parched lips can no longer kiss Thy most sacred Wounds, remember then those kisses which now I imprint on Thee, and have mercy on me.

When my cold hands can no longer embrace Thy Cross, forget not the affection with which I embrace it now, and have mercy on me.

And when, at length, my swollen and lifeless tongue can no longer speak, remember that I called upon Thee now.

Jesus, Mary, Joseph, to Thee do I commend my soul.

Prayer for a Deceased Person

OGOD, Whose way it is always to have mercy and to spare, we beseech Thee on behalf of the soul of Thy servant (*Name*), whom Thou hast called out of this world; look upon him (*her*) with pity and let him be conducted by the holy Angels to Paradise, his true country. Grant that he who believed in Thee and hoped in Thee may not be left to suffer the pains of the Purgatorial fire, but may be admitted to eternal joys, through Jesus Christ, Thy Son Our Lord, who with Thee and the Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth world without end. Amen.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be.

V. Eternal rest grant unto him (*her*), O Lord;

R. And let perpetual light shine upon him (*her*).

V. May he (she) rest in peace.

R. Amen.

Prayer for the Poor Souls

OMOST gentle Heart of Jesus, ever present in the Blessed Sacrament, ever consumed with burning love for the poor captive souls in Purgatory, have mercy on the souls of Thy departed servants. Be not severe in Thy judgments, but let some drops of Thy Precious Blood fall upon the devouring flames. And do Thou, O Merciful Saviour, send Thy holy Angels to conduct them to a place of refreshment, light and peace. Amen.

A Prayer for the Dead

OGOD, the Creator and Redeemer of all the Faithful, grant unto the souls of Thy departed servants full remission of all their sins, that through the help of our pious supplications they may obtain that pardon which they have always desired, Thou Who livest and reignest world without end. Amen.

V. Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord.

R. And let perpetual light shine upon them.

V. May the divine assistance remain always with us. Amen.

R. And may the souls of all the Faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

A Prayer for Our Dear Departed

O GOOD JESUS, Whose loving Heart was ever troubled by the sorrows of others, look with pity on the souls of our dear ones in Purgatory, especially (*Names*). O Thou Who didst "love Thine own," hear our cry for mercy, and grant that those whom Thou hast called from our homes and hearts may soon enjoy everlasting rest in the home of Thy Love in Heaven. Amen.

V. Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord.

R. And let perpetual light shine upon them. Amen.

Prayer to St. Peregrine "The Cancer Saint"

O GLORIOUS wonder-worker, St. Peregrine, who suffered so patiently with incurable cancer in thy leg and then wert healed miraculously by a touch of Our Lord's divine hand, I beg of thee to obtain for me deliverance from the infirmities that afflict my body (*especially ...*), if this be God's Holy Will. Obtain for me also a perfect resignation to the sufferings it may please God to send me, so that, imitating our crucified Saviour and His sorrowful Mother, I may merit eternal glory in Heaven. Amen.

St. Peregrine, pray for us.

Prayer to St. Gerard For Motherhood

O GOOD St. Gerard, powerful patron and protector of mothers and of children yet unborn, to thee do I turn in my hour of anxiety. Of thee do I beg the blessings of a happy motherhood. When all human assistance seems to fail, deign to come to my aid by thy powerful intercession at the throne of Almighty God. Beseech the Divine Author of Life to bless me with offspring, that I may raise up children to God in this life who will be heirs to His heavenly Kingdom in the next. Amen.

Prayer to St. Gerard For a Mother with Child

(To be said either for oneself or for another.)

O ALMIGHTY and Everlasting God, Who through the operation of the Holy Ghost didst prepare the body and soul of the glorious Virgin Mary to be a worthy dwelling place of Thy Divine Son; and through the operation of the same Holy Ghost, didst sanctify St. John the Baptist while still in his mother's womb, hearken to the prayers of Thy humble servant who implores Thee, through the intercession of St. Gerard, to protect her (*me*) amidst the dangers of childbearing and to watch over the child with which Thou hast deigned to bless her (*me*): that it may be cleansed by the saving water of Baptism, and that, after living a Christian life on earth, both the child and its mother may attain to everlasting bliss in Heaven. Amen.

Prayer to St. Gerard in Thanksgiving for A Safe Delivery

O GOOD St. Gerard, wonderful Patron of Mothers, deign to offer to God my heartfelt gratitude for the great blessing of motherhood. In my long hours of anxiety, uncertainty and doubt, thy powerful intercession with Jesus my Lord and Mary my Queen was ever my hope. Obtain for me the grace always to turn to thee in similar trials. Help me to inspire other women with confidence in thy most gracious assistance. Aid all of us, that, doing God's holy Will as mothers here on earth, we may merit eternal life in Heaven, through Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Prayer in Honor of St. Dymphna, Patroness of Those with Mental And Nervous Disorders

O LORD GOD, Who has graciously chosen St. Dymphna to be the patroness of those afflicted with mental and nervous disorders and has caused her to be an inspiration and a symbol of charity to the thousands who invoke her intercession, grant, through the prayers of this pure, youthful martyr, relief and consolation to all who suffer from these disturbances, and especially to those for whom we now pray. (*Here mention oneself or names of others.*)

We beg Thee to accept and to satisfy the prayers of St. Dymphna on our behalf. Grant us patience in all our sufferings and resignation to Thy divine Will. Fill us with hope, and if it be in accord with Thy divine plan, bestow upon me (him, her) the cure I so earnestly ask for. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.



The Infant of Prague

Novena Prayer to the Infant Jesus of Prague For a Special Favor

O DEAREST JESUS, tenderly loving us, Thy greatest joy is to dwell among us and to bestow Thy blessing upon us! Though I am not worthy that Thou shouldst behold me with love, I feel myself drawn to Thee, O dear Infant Jesus, because Thou dost gladly pardon me and exercise Thine almighty power over me.

So many who turned with confidence to Thee have received graces and had their petitions granted. Behold me: in spirit I kneel before Thy miraculous image on Thine altar in Prague and lay open my heart to Thee, with its prayers, petitions and hopes. Especially the affair of (*Name your request*) do I enclose in Thy loving Heart. Govern me and do with me and mine according to Thy holy will, for I know that in Thy Divine wisdom and love Thou wilt ordain everything for the best. Almighty gracious Infant Jesus, do not withdraw Thy hand from us, but protect and bless us forever.

I pray Thee, sweetest Infant, in the name of Thy Blessed Mother Mary, who cared for Thee with such tenderness, and by the great reverence with which St. Joseph carried Thee in his arms, comfort me and grant my petition, that I may bless and thank Thee forever with all my heart. Amen.

Prayer of a Sick Person for Health of Body and Soul

This prayer can be prayed by anyone. It includes acts of faith, love and perfect contrition.

O LORD Jesus Christ, Who during Thy brief life on earth went about doing good to all men, be merciful to me in this, my hour of special need.

O Divine Physician, Thy tender heart was ever moved at the sight of pain and affliction. I beg of Thee, if it be Thy holy Will, to help me regain my health and strength. Stretch forth Thy hand to all who suffer, whether in mind or in body. Grant to each of us that peace of soul which Thou alone canst give.

I believe that in God there are three Divine Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

I believe that God so loved the world that He sent Thee, His only-begotten Son, Who died on the Cross for our salvation.

I believe that God, in His mercy and justice, rewards goodness and punishes evil.

I am truly sorry for all my sins, Dear Lord, because they have offended Thee, Who art Goodness itself. I love Thee with all my heart, and with Thy help, I will try never to offend Thee again. Assist me to do all that is necessary to obtain eternal life.

Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!

Prayer in Time of Sickness

O DIVINE PHYSICIAN, Who always loved to console and heal the sick of body and mind, grant me patience to bear my sufferings. By Thy power, relieve the sharpness of my pain and exhaustion, but above all, kind Jesus, heal the wounds of my soul. And even though I find it hard to pray, yet shall I ever say: Thy Will be done. Amen.

Prayer to St. Maria Goretti for Purity and Holiness

O ST. MARIA GORETTI, strengthened by God's grace, thou didst not hesitate, even at the age of eleven, to sacrifice life itself to defend thy virginal purity. Look graciously on the unhappy human race that has strayed far from the path of eternal salvation. Teach us that promptness in fleeing temptation that will help us avoid anything that could offend Jesus. Obtain for me a great horror of impurity and of all sin, so that I may live a holy life on earth and win eternal glory in Heaven. Amen.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be.

A Child's Prayer through the Intercession of St. John Bosco

O ALMIGHTY GOD, Who hast given me my father and mother and made them an image of Thine authority and love, and hast commanded me to love, honor and obey them: grant me, through the intercession of St. John Bosco, grace to observe faithfully this law. Grant me grace to profit from their admonitions, and make me respect all those who take their place. Deliver me from pride, rebellion, stubbornness, evil temper and laziness. Make me diligent in all my duties and patient in all my trials, so that one day I may be happy with Thee forever in Heaven. Amen.

Prayer to St. Anthony Mary Claret For the Cure of Cancer or Other Serious Ailment

Our Lady told St. Anthony Mary Claret (1807-1870) that she would obtain from God anything he asked for through her Immaculate Heart.

O ST. ANTHONY MARY CLARET, who during thy life on earth was often a solace to the afflicted, and didst love and tenderly compassionate the sick, intercede for me as thou dost rejoice in the reward of thy virtues. Cast a glance of pity on (*here mention the person afflicted with cancer or other serious ailment*) and grant my petition, if such be the will of God. Make my troubles thine own. Ask the Immaculate Heart of Mary to obtain by her powerful intercession the grace I yearn for so ardently, and a blessing that may strengthen me during life, assist me at the hour of death and lead me on to a happy eternity. Amen.

Prayer to St. Raphael The Archangel for a Cure

OGOOD St. Raphael, I invoke thee as the patron of those who are afflicted with bodily illness or ailment. Thou didst prepare the remedy which cured the blindness of the elder Tobias, and thy name means "God has healed."

I turn to thee for help in my present need. (*Mention your request.*) If it be the Will of God, deign to cure my ailment, or at least to give me the strength I need to bear it patiently in atonement for my sins and for the salvation of my soul. Teach me to unite my sufferings with those of Jesus and Mary and to seek God's grace in prayer and Holy Communion. I wish to imitate thee in thy zeal to do God's Will in all things. Like young Tobias, I choose thee as my companion on my journey through this valley of tears. I wish to follow thine inspirations every step of the way, so that I may reach my journey's end under thy constant protection and in the grace of God.

St. Raphael, to the elder Tobias thou didst reveal thyself as "the help of the grace of God." Be thou my help and deign to obtain for me the grace of God and the favor I ask of thee through thy powerful intercession. Physician from God, deign to cure me as thou didst cure Tobias.

St. Raphael, thou who art called "the Remedy of God" and "the Angel of Health," pray for me. Amen.

In honor of St. Raphael, recite one Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be.

Prayer to St. Raphael For the Wise Choice of a Marriage Partner

OGLORIOUS St. Raphael, Patron and Lover of the Young, I call upon thee and plead with thee for thy help. In all confidence I open my heart to thee, to beg thy guidance and assistance in the important task of planning my future. Obtain for me through thy intercession the light of God's grace, so that I may decide wisely concerning the person who is to be my partner through life. O Angel of Happy Meetings, lead us by the hand to find each other. May all our movements be guided by thy light and transfigured by thy joy. As thou didst lead the young Tobias to Sara and opened up for him a new life of happiness with her in holy marriage, lead me to such a one whom in thine angelic wisdom thou dost judge best suited to be united with me in marriage.

St. Raphael, loving Patron of those seeking a marriage partner, help me in this supreme decision of my life. Find for me as a helpmate in life that person whose character will reflect the traits of Jesus and Mary. May he (*she*) be upright, loyal, pure, sincere and noble, so that with united efforts and with chaste and unselfish love, we both may strive to perfect ourselves in soul and body, as well as the children it may please God to entrust to our care.

St. Raphael, Angel of chaste courtship, bless our friendship and our love, that sin may have no part in it. May our mutual love bind us so closely that our future home may ever be most like the home of the Holy Family of Nazareth. Offer thy prayers to God for both of us and obtain the blessing of God upon our marriage, as thou wert the herald of blessing for the marriage of Tobias and Sara.

St. Raphael, Friend of the Young, be thou my friend, for I shall always be thine. I desire ever to invoke thee in my needs. To thy special care I entrust the decision I am to make as to my future wife (*husband*). Direct me to the person with whom I can best cooperate in doing God's Holy Will, with whom I can live in peace, love and harmony in this life and attain to eternal joy in the next. Amen.

In honor of Saint Raphael recite one Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be.

Prayer to St. Raphael For Purity

ST. RAPHAEL, Patron Angel of Youth, I beg of thee to plead with God for me, that I may always keep my life pure and holy. As thou didst guard the young Tobias from dangers of soul and body on his journey to a strange land, protect me from the many dangers that confront me in my life. Strengthen me in my struggle against the temptations of the world, the flesh and the devil.

I pray and beg of thee, glorious St. Raphael, to be my Patron Angel of Purity. For thy great love for Jesus, the King of the Angels, and for Mary, the Queen of the Angels, deign to keep me from all unclean-ness and to obtain that my mind may be untainted, my heart pure and my body chaste. May I frequently receive the "Bread of Angels" in Holy Communion, that It may be an effective remedy and protection against the temptations that press round about me, and seal my heart forever against the suggestions of sinful pleasures. Help me always to serve Jesus and Mary in perfect chastity, so that one day I may merit to belong to those of whom Jesus spoke when He said, "Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God." Amen.

Prayer to Our Sorrowful Mother for a Favor

MOST holy and afflicted Virgin, Queen of Martyrs, who stood beneath the Cross, witnessing the agony of thy dying Son, look with a mother's tenderness and pity on me, who kneel before thee. To whom shall I have recourse in my needs and miseries if not to thee, O Mother of Mercy? Thou hast drunk so deeply of the chalice of thy Son that thou canst compassionate all our sorrows. I venerate thy sorrows, and I place my request with filial confidence in the sanctuary of thy wounded heart. (*Here mention your request.*)

Present it, I beseech thee, on my behalf to Jesus Christ, through the merits of His own most sacred Passion and Death, together with thine own sufferings at the foot of the Cross. Through the united efficacy of both thy Son's sufferings and thy own, obtain the granting of my petition.

Holy Mary, whose soul was pierced by a sword of sorrow at the sight of the Passion of thy divine Son, intercede for me and obtain for me from Jesus this favor, if it be for His honor and glory and for my good. Amen.

Prayer for a Person Who is Seriously Ill

MOST merciful Jesus, the Consolation and Salvation of all who put their trust in Thee, we humbly beseech Thee, by Thy most bitter Passion, grant recovery of health to Thy servant (*Name*), provided this be for his (her) soul's welfare, that with us he (*she*) may praise and magnify Thy holy name. But if it be Thy holy will to call him (her) out of this world, strengthen him (her) in his (her) last hour, grant him (her) a peaceful death and bring him (her) to life everlasting. Amen.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be.

Novena Prayer to Our Mother Of Perpetual Help

OMOTHER of Perpetual Help, thou art the dispenser of all the gifts which God grants to us miserable sinners; and for this end He has made thee so powerful, so rich and so bountiful, in order that thou mayest help us in our misery. Thou art the advocate of the most wretched and abandoned sinners who have recourse to thee. Come to my aid, dearest Mother, for I recommend myself to thee. In thy hands I place my eternal salvation, and to thee do I entrust my soul. Count me among thy most devoted servants; take me under thy protection, and it is enough for me. For if thou wilt protect me, dear Mother, I fear nothing: not from my sins, because thou wilt obtain for me the pardon of them; nor from the devils, because thou art more powerful than all Hell together; nor even from Jesus, my Judge Himself, because by one prayer from thee, He will be appeased. But one thing I fear, that in the hour of temptation, I may neglect to call upon thee and thus perish miserably.

Obtain for me, then, O Mother of Perpetual Help, the pardon of my sins, love for Jesus, final perseverance, and the grace to have recourse to thee always.

Three Hail Marys.

A Prayer to Our Mother Of Perpetual Help for The Conversion of a Sinner

OMARY, Mother of Perpetual Help, thou knowest so well the great value of an immortal soul. Thou knowest what it means, that every soul has been redeemed by the Blood of thy Divine Son. Thou wilt not then despise my prayer if I ask from thee the conversion of a sinner, nay, a great sinner, who is rapidly hurrying on toward eternal ruin. Thou, O good and merciful Mother, knowest well his (*her*) irregular life. Remember that thou art the Refuge of Sinners; remember that God has given thee power to bring about the conversion of even the most wretched sinners. All that has been done for his (*her*) soul has been unsuccessful; if thou wilt not come to his (*her*) assistance, he (*she*) will go from bad to worse. Obtain for him (*her*) the effectual grace that he (*she*) may be moved and brought back to God and to his (*her*) duties. Send him (*her*), if necessary, temporal calamities and trials, that he (*she*) may enter into himself (*herself*) and put an end to his (*her*) sinful course. Thou, O most merciful Mother, hast converted so many sinners through thine intercession, at the prayer to thee of their friends. Be then also moved by *my* prayer, and bring this unhappy soul to true conversion of heart.

O Mother of Perpetual Help, deign to show that thou art the Advocate and Refuge of Sinners. So I hope, so may it be. Amen.

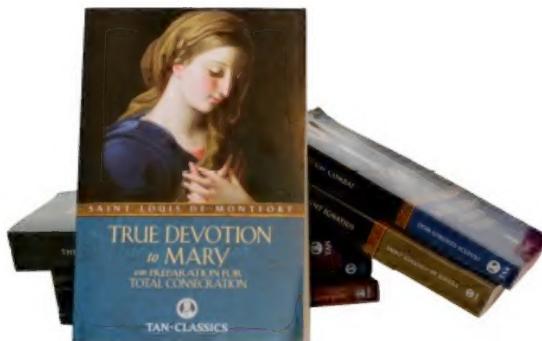
Deliver Us From Evil

The prayer Libera Nos is said after the Pater Noster of the Traditional Mass.

DELIVER us, we beseech Thee, O Lord, from all evils, past, present and to come, and by the intercession of the blessed and glorious Mary ever virgin, Mother of God, and of Thy blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, and of Andrew and of all Thy Saints, mercifully grant peace in our days, that aided by the help of Thy mercy, we may be always free from sin and secure from all disturbance, through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who lives and reigns with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

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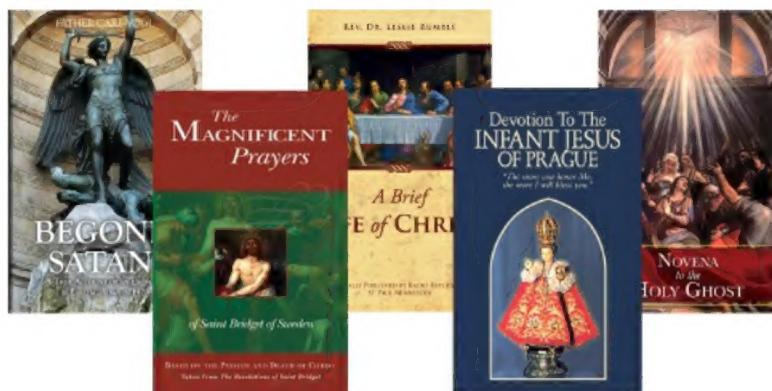
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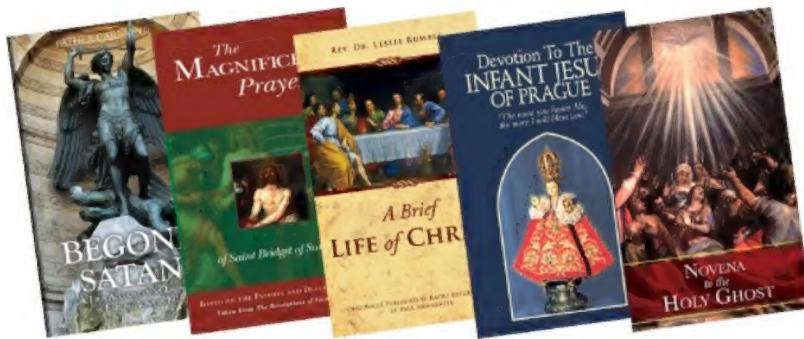
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